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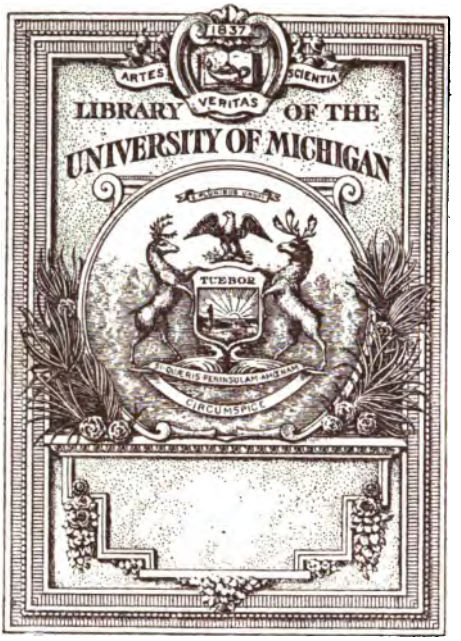

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UNEMPLOYMENT AND AMERICAN TRADE UNIONS

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BY
D. P. SMELSER

A DISSERTATION
Submitted to the Board of University Studies of The Johns Hopkins University in conformity with the Requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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1919

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CONTENTS

		Page
Preface		vii
Chapter I.	Statistics of Unemployment	9
Chapter II.	The Trade Union Theory of Unemployment	34
Chapter III.	Local Union Employment Bureaus	57
Chapter IV.	Union Agencies for the Distribution of Workmen	75
Chapter V.	Distribution of Employment	109
Chapter VI.	Unemployment Insurance	130

PREFACE

This monograph had its origin in an investigation carried on by the author while a member of the Economic Seminary of the Johns Hopkins University. The principal sources of information have been the trade-union publications contained in the Johns Hopkins Library. Documentary evidence was also supplemented by numerous personal interviews with trade-union officials.

The author wishes to express his appreciation of the helpful criticism and advice received from Professor J. H. Hollander and Professor G. E. Barnett.

D. P. S.

UNEMPLOYMENT AND AMERICAN TRADE UNIONS

CHAPTER I

Statistics of Unemployment

Statistical information as to unemployment in the United States is less adequate and reliable than that as to almost any other social problem. The federal government, several of the States, and various other agencies have made censuses of the unemployed from time to time, but in the greater number of cases the data thus secured are of little value.

It is obvious that for an exhaustive study of the problem of unemployment there must exist adequate and trustworthy statistical information upon which to base the investigation. In other words, the problem must be stated before it can be solved. This is especially true for a study of the methods which the trade unions use in meeting the problem, since the amount and character of the unemployment in each trade necessarily determine the methods which each trade union uses. Thus, a trade union a majority of whose members are unemployed during certain seasons each year would not be likely to provide for the payment of out-of-work benefits during these periods, but would attempt to establish the policy of equal distribution of employment and encourage their members to seek employment in other occupations. On the other hand, trades in which the state of employment varies considerably from one community to another would probably attempt to establish employment bureaus in order to transfer their members from one city to another.

It will be the aim of this chapter to consider the sources of statistical information as to unemployment among organ-

ized wage earners, to consider briefly the data which appear to be the most reliable, and to attempt to determine the relative volume and character of unemployment in some of the principal trades, in order to show how different the problem is in the various trades and to make clear that conditions determine, to a great extent, the methods which each trade union employs to solve it.

The sources of statistical information as to unemployment among trade unionists are the publications of the state departments of labor and of the trade unions. While reference will be made to all the data which have been collected, only those data which can be more or less successfully utilized in the study will be particularly described.

The New York Department of Labor has collected since March, 1897, statistics of unemployment among the trade unionists of that State. From 1897 to 1914 it collected semi-annually, from all the trade unions, information as to the number of members employed and unemployed on the last working days of March and September, the causes of such unemployment, the number of members idle throughout the first and third quarters of the year, and the number of days which each member worked during these periods. The supply of this information was made compulsory by law. Since December, 1901, the New York Department has selected certain local unions in each trade and industry from which it has secured monthly returns as to unemployment. It has attempted to select local unions which have reliable and intelligent secretaries, to have each trade represented in proportion to the number of workmen engaged in each class, and to maintain the same proportionate representation from month to month so that the data may be comparable.

Both classes of statistics are of doubtful value. The secretaries of the local unions in many cases had no means by which they could determine the actual number employed and unemployed, and consequently they resorted to rough estimates. Further, there was a tendency to exaggerate the amount of unemployment in the hope that this would favor-

ably affect public opinion. These defects were especially inherent in the data collected semi-annually from all unions, and for this reason the collection of this class of data was discontinued in 1914. The data relating to selected unions are defective in many respects, but it is thought that, while they are of no great value as regards the actual amount of unemployment, they are of considerable importance in making apparent the movements in the state of employment from month to month and from year to year. It is for this reason that a summary of the data thus collected is given below. It may be well to state that these statistics represent about 235 local unions with a membership of 150,000, which is about 25 per cent of the trade-union membership of the State.

STATE OF EMPLOYMENT OF ORGANIZED LABOR IN NEW YORK STATE, AS REPORTED BY REPRESENTATIVE UNIONS, 1901 TO 1915

(From Bulletins of the New York Department of Labor)

	Percentage of Members Unemployed on Last Working Day of											
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
1902	20.9	18.7	17.3	15.3	14.0	14.5	15.6	7.1	6.3	11.2	14.3	22.2
1903	29.5	17.8	17.6	17.3	20.2	23.1	17.8	15.4	9.4	11.7	16.4	23.1
1904	25.8	21.6	27.1	17.0	15.9	13.7	14.8	13.7	12.0	10.8	11.1	19.6
1905	22.5	19.4	19.2	11.8	8.3	9.1	8.0	7.2	5.9	5.6	6.1	11.1
1906	15.0	15.3	11.6	7.3	7.0	6.3	7.6	5.8	6.3	6.9	7.6	15.4
1907	21.5	20.1	18.3	10.1	10.5	8.1	8.5	12.1	12.3	18.5	22.0	32.7
1908	36.9	37.5	37.5	33.9	32.2	30.2	26.8	24.6	24.6	23.1	21.5	28.0
1909	29.3	26.5	23.0	20.3	17.1	17.4	13.9	11.9	14.5	13.7	13.3	20.6
1910	24.5	22.4	22.6	16.0	14.5	15.4	19.4	22.3	12.5	15.0	17.5	27.3
1911	26.7	24.8	25.6	21.3	27.2	22.9	15.5	11.7	11.2	11.6	20.0	34.2
1912	25.8	17.6	18.8	13.3	20.1	22.8	21.1	9.1	5.9	7.4	15.3	30.1
1913	38.2	33.4	21.8	21.7	22.9	22.2	20.8	19.6	16.2	19.3	27.8	40.0
1914	32.3	30.7	28.3	23.6	22.7	25.5	32.5	30.3	24.3	24.9	35.8	35.7
1915	40.1	32.2	27.4	26.4	31.8	25.5	26.0	19.3	14.9	12.7	17.6	21.9

The table clearly indicates the fluctuations in employment from month to month and from year to year. During 1902, 1903, and 1904 the average percentage of unemployment was around 13, but gradually decreased until the depression of 1907 and 1908 when it sharply rose, gradually dropping however after the spring of 1909. During 1910 and 1911 the

percentage was fairly constant, but there was a 25 per cent decrease in unemployment in 1912; for several of the months the percentages were lower than they had been for five or six years. However, after November, 1912, the percentages, if we disregard seasonal fluctuations, gradually rose until the fall of 1915.

It will be noted that during the past seven years an average of between 20 and 25 per cent of the workmen in the selected unions have been returned as unemployed on the last working day of each month. The minimum percentage for the period was 5.6 in October, 1905, while the maximum was 40.1 in January, 1915. The instances in which the monthly percentage was under 10 number less than twenty-five. The seasonal fluctuations are clearly indicated in the table. January reports the highest percentage of the year, after which the percentage drops gradually to September and October, in which months it appears that there is less unemployment than at any other time. November and December show very high percentages.

The Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics, since March, 1908, has collected data as to unemplyoment from trade unions situated in that State. This information is comparable, in many respects, to that collected by the New York Department. In Massachusetts information as to unemployment is secured only from those unions which desire to report their working conditions. However, the majority of the trade-union membership is represented in the returns. Thus, for the quarter ending September 30, 1915, returns were made by 1052 local unions representing 175,754 organized wage earners, or approximately 75 per cent of the trade-union membership of the State.[1] Monthly returns are not made by any of the unions, reports being made only for the last working days of the four quarters of the year by the secretaries of the local unions. The returns are scrutinized by the bureau's experts and if any errors are apparent the schedules are returned for correction.

[1] The Thirty-first Quarterly Report on Unemployment in Massachusetts: Quarter ending September 30, 1915, p. 1.

The following table shows the percentage of members unemployed at the end of each quarter from March, 1908, to December, 1915:

STATE OF EMPLOYMENT OF ORGANIZED LABOR IN MASSACHUSETTS
(From Bulletins of the Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics)

	Percentage of Members Unemployed.			
	March 31	June 30	September 30	December 31
1908	17.9	14.4	10.6	13.9
1909	11.4	6.4	4.8	9.4
1910	7.1	7.0	5.6	10.2
1911	10.4	6.6	5.6	9.7
1912	14.1	5.3	4.7	9.1
1913	11.3	6.4	6.8	10.4
1914	12.9	9.9	11.0	18.3
1915	16.6	10.6	7.0	8.6

The striking fact disclosed by these figures is their great disparity with the New York data. When idleness due to other causes than lack of work, lack of material, and the state of the weather has been eliminated, the averages of the New York and Massachusetts percentages for the last working days of the four quarters of the year, for the period 1908–1915, are 19.2 per cent and 7.5 per cent respectively. The most plausible explanation of this difference is the larger proportion of highly seasonal workmen represented in the New York data. In the reports for June 30, 1915, for example, the building trades represent more than 25 per cent of the workmen included in the New York report,[2] while in the Massachusetts figures for that date the returns for the building trades constitute less than 20 per cent of the total figures.[3] But what appear to be of even greater importance are the different proportions of the totals represented by garment workers. In the returns for June, 1915, the garment workers constituted 21 per cent

[2] Idleness of Organized Wage Earners in the First-half of 1915, Bulletin of the New York Department of Labor, whole no. 73, p. 11.
[3] Calculated from table in Thirteenth Quarterly Report on Unemployment in Massachusetts, June 30, 1915, p. 11.

of those included in the New York returns,[4] while in the Massachusetts data for that date this class of workmen formed less than 3 per cent of the members reporting.[5] Unemployment in the building trades and in the garment industry of New York is twice as great as the average in other trades taken together. Thus, the average of the monthly percentages of unemployment in the building trades from 1907 to 1914 in New York was 29, and that for the garment industry was approximately the same, while the average of all industries was only 22 per cent. When it is remembered that the average of all industries is weighted in proportion to the relative representation of trades, and that the garment workers and building trades mechanics constitute more than 50 per cent of the total, the effect of the great amount of unemployment in these two industries upon the average percentage is easily seen.

The New Hampshire Bureau of Labor is the only other state bureau which has collected statistics of unemployment among organized wage earners, and these statistics are practically valueless as they give only the percentages of members unemployed throughout the first and second quarters of 1915. It seems that the secretaries of the local unions, in most cases, were unable to accurately report such information.

A number of the American trade unions have attempted to collect statistics of unemployment of their members. Generally these attempts have failed, either because the secretaries of the local unions refused to report conditions accurately, or because the secretary of the national union failed to recognize the importance of the statistical information as to unemployment. The unions have the opportunity of collecting such material at small expense. In all unions the secretaries of the subordinate branches make monthly reports to headquarters concerning various sub-

[4] Bulletin of the New York Department of Labor, whole no. 73, p. 11.

[5] Calculated from table in Thirteenth Quarterly Report on Unemployment in Massachusetts, June 30, 1915, p. 11.

jects, and where statistical information as to unemployment has been collected these monthly reports have generally been utilized for this purpose.

The American Federation of Labor collected from 1899 to 1908 data relating to unemployment among members of its affiliated unions. The number of workmen represented in the returns varied as much as 800 per cent from one month to another in the same year, and as the reports were made by the secretaries of the national unions it is obvious that the data secured were not accurate. For this reason the collection of this information was discontinued in 1909.

The Wisconsin State Federation of Labor has collected statistics of unemployment from its affiliated unions since 1912. The information collected in 1912 was worthless and that for the two succeeding years was far from satisfactory. In 1913 the affiliated unions were requested to report the percentages of members unemployed on September 1. Returns were made by 243 local unions with a total membership of 19,921. Of these, 1436 members, or 7.2 per cent, were reported as idle.[6] This percentage is but four-tenths of one per cent higher than that of Massachusetts for September 30 of the same year, while it is 12.8 lower than the New York percentage for August 31.

A few unions have realized the benefits accruing from the collection of statistical information as to unemployment and have accordingly provided in their constitutions that the local union secretaries shall report the state of employment at specified periods. For example, the Potters,[7] Plumbers,[8] Boilermakers,[9] Iron Molders,[10] Lithographers,[11] Elevator Constructors,[12] and Metal Polishers[13] require the secre-

[6] Labor Conditions in Wisconsin: Second Report by the Executive Board of the Wisconsin State Federation of Labor, July 1, 1914, p. 15.
[7] Constitution, 1913, sec. 132.
[8] Constitution, 1913, sec. 36.
[9] Constitution for Local Unions, 1914, art. 2, sec. 6.
[10] Constitution, 1912, art. 5, sec. 1.
[11] Constitution for Local Unions, 1913, art. 5, sec. 1.
[12] Constitution, 1910, art. 6, sec. 3.
[13] Constitution, 1913, art. 32, sec. 1.

taries of their subordinate unions to report either monthly or quarterly the number of members employed and unemployed. But little attention is paid by the secretaries to these provisions, and in the unions where the information is reported it is neither used by the general secretaries nor compiled for publication.

The Painters, Paperhangers, and Decorators at their convention in 1913 provided that an official "time book" should be issued to each member of the union, who was to record in it all time lost through unemployment and the causes of such idleness, and report quarterly to his local union. The secretaries of the subordinate branches were instructed to compile these reports and send them to the national union.[14] It was thought that much valuable information could thus be secured. Considerable light would have been thrown upon the question of variation in unemployment among localities. However, it was found impossible to secure the desired information from the members except through a system of fines, which, of course, would have had a tendency to produce inaccurate statistics. Consequently, these time books are used in only a few unions.[15] It is understood that the Chicago local union has collected statistics of unemployment from its members for five or six years. It was reported at the convention in 1913 that the data collected in the two previous years indicated that the average painter lost ninety-eight working days each year through inability to secure work.[16]

The Glass Bottle Blowers have collected and privately published statistical information as to unemployment among its members for several years. But in consequence of the fact that no distinction is made between the members totally unemployed and those working as "spare men" this information is of little value. There is also available in the monthly journals of the Wood Carvers data as to the number of members employed and unemployed on the last

[14] Constitution, 1913, sec. 238.
[15] Interview with General Secretary Skemp, August, 1915.
[16] Proceedings, 1913, p. 635.

working day of the month. Percentages of unemployment have been calculated for the period 1909–1915, and there is little fluctuation in them from month to month and from year to year, the rate of unemployment ranging between twenty and twenty-five per cent. This would seem to indicate that the returns are not accurate but mere estimates of the secretaries.

The only statistics of unemployment collected by the trade unions which it was possible to utilize in this study are the data collected by the Bricklayers, Masons and Plasterers from 1882 to 1911, by the Pattern Makers from April, 1907, to December, 1916, and by the Flint Glass Workers from 1907 to 1915.

In view of the fact that so little attention has been given to the collection of data as to unemployment in the United States before 1900, it is rather surprising to find that the Bricklayers' Union, organized in 1865, collected semi-annually statistics of unemployment from 1882 to 1911 and monthly thereafter.[17] These statistics are based upon the reports by the local secretaries of the number of members employed and unemployed. Not all of the unions reported, as some were always in a state of disorganization or were involved in labor disputes; but the reports are fairly representative of the entire membership, and the average percentage of the membership included in the data for the period 1882–1911 is 79.1. There is no reason to believe that those unions which are not represented in the returns, except the few on strike, had more or less unemployment than the average of those reporting. The returns unfortunately include members who were reported as unemployed on account of labor disputes and illness. Of course the inclusion of these members has produced high percentages of unemployment.

Another important question is whether the secretaries correctly reported the number of the unemployed. Secre-

[17] The data collected since 1911 have not been compiled, the secretary merely using the information. (Interview with Secretary Dobson, August, 1915.)

taries of unions having less than fifty members could easily determine the number of unemployed, since they generally knew the places where members were at work; but in unions with a larger membership—many of the local unions have from 100 to 7000 members—the secretaries were unable to make exact returns from their own knowledge. In such cases the secretaries either based their returns upon rough estimates or upon the reports of the stewards. It is impossible to determine the extent to which the stewards' reports were used. It would not have been difficult to ascertain the exact number of members employed on a given day if these reports had been used, because each week the stewards on the various jobs reported the names of all members working on particular days. The reports are supposed to give the number of members employed and unemployed on the last working days of June and December; but it is understood that frequently the returns were based upon the condition of trade slightly before and after these dates. These data are presented in the following table, principally because they represent the only continuous record respecting unemployment in the United States before 1897.

UNEMPLOYMENT OF MEMBERS OF THE BRICKLAYERS, MASONS AND PLASTERERS

(From Semi-Annual Reports of the General Secretary)

Year	Percentage of Members Unemployed		Year	Percentage of Members Unemployed	
	June	December		June	December
1882	10.0	20.2	1897	41.4	51.7
1883	4.6	26.4	1898	38.8	47.6
1884	11.1	48.6	1899	18.2	31.2
1885	20.5	33.6	1900	29.8	34.7
1886	15.1	36.7	1901	8.8	20.9
1887	6.0	37.1	1902	10.5	23.8
1888	15.2	37.3	1903	11.5	45.8
1889	13.3	34.1	1904	14.2	36.9
1890	12.5	37.1	1905	10.5	23.4
1891	24.8	37.2	1906	11.7	24.0
1892	18.7	37.6	1907	16.4	51.2
1893	22.2	67.7	1908	42.2	48.8
1894	49.6	54.6	1909	17.2	30.1
1895	28.1	43.2	1910	12.8	30.2
1896	33.3	55.9	1911	26.3	

As was to be expected, the figures show great differences in unemployment between summer and winter. Every one realizes that there is, on the whole, less work for bricklayers in December than in June; but few realize how great the difference is. December 31 and June 30 may be taken as dates representative of the poor and good seasons of employment in the building industry. It is to be noted that, without exception, in the period 1882–1911 unemployment was greater in December than in June of any one year. The mean of the December figures is 37.47 per cent, while the mean of the June figures is only 19.84 per cent. By taking the average of the percentages for the two seasons over a period of thirty years the effects of special circumstances, cyclical fluctuations, and general changes of level may be eliminated or made inappreciable, and the seasonal fluctuation alone is seen. The table also discloses a remarkable series of waves of good and bad employment. The average unemployment for the four minima, 1882, 1883, 1901, 1905, is 15.6 per cent or one-third of the maximum. It would be interesting, if the statistics of a sufficient number of years were available, to compare this range with the fluctuations in other trades. Beveridge has shown that in England those trades which are most regularly affected by seasonal movement from month to month are those least affected by a cyclical fluctuation from year to year.[18] From an examination of the existing statistics in the United States it appears that this does not hold true in this country.

The Flint Glass Workers have collected quarterly statistics of unemployment since 1907, but the data are fragmentary from 1907 to 1912. In 1913 the union also included in its inquiry questions as to the number of members who were unemployed at the trade, but who had secured temporary employment in other lines of industry. Accordingly, the local unions were requested to report the number of members employed at the trade, the number holding hon-

[18] W. H. Beveridge, Unemployment: A Problem of Industry, 1909, p. 40.

orary membership, disabled, and working outside the trade, and the number of those who were willing and able to work but had not found employment of any kind.

The following table shows the data thus collected:

UNEMPLOYMENT OF MEMBERS OF THE FLINT GLASS WORKERS UNION
(From Quarterly Reports of the Secretary)

	Percentage of Members		
	Employed at Trade	Employed Outside Trade	Unemployed
1907 Aug. 31	80	—	20
Nov. 30	82	—	18
1908 Feb. 28	80	—	20
1909 Feb. 28	87	—	13
1910 Feb. 28	87	—	13
May 31	84	—	16
1911 Feb. 28	87	—	13
May 31	85	—	15
1912 Feb. 28	87	—	13
May 31	87	—	13
Aug. 31	80	—	20
Nov. 30	90	—	10
1913 Feb. 28	91	—	9
May 31	90	6	4
Aug. 31	86	8	6
Nov. 30	87	7	6
1914 Feb. 28	87	6	7
May 31	84	8	8
Aug. 31	74	9	17
Nov. 30	76	13	11
1915 Feb. 28	76	10	14
May 31	81	7	12
Aug. 31	80	8	12
Nov. 30	85	9	6

The percentage of the members employed at the trade, it will be noted, varied from 74 on August 31, 1914, to 91 on February 28, 1913. The means for the four quarters for the period 1912–1915 were 83, 84, 78 and 81 per cent. It appears that the state of employment is, on the average, practically the same in all four quarters. Since 1913 of those not employed at the trade on the average 8.2 per cent were employed outside the trade, while 9.1 per cent were returned as unemployed.

The fact that many workmen secure subsidiary employ-

ment when they are unable to secure employment at their principal occupations is a factor that has frequently been overlooked in discussions of unemployment statistics. The fact that the unions in a particular trade report that 30 per cent of their members were unemployed on a certain day should not be construed to indicate that 30 per cent of their members were not working, but that 30 per cent were not engaged at their principal occupation. This defect in trade union statistics of unemployment is due to the fact that the secretary of a local union estimates the percentages of unemployment with the idea that the information which is most desirable is that relating to the number of members who are unable to secure employment under the jurisdiction of the union.

Statistical information as to unemployment among the members of the Pattern Makers' Union is available for each month since April, 1907. These data have been secured from the reports of the local union secretaries to the national president who compiles the statistics for private use and for publication.[19] The secretaries are instructed to "give the exact number of members unemployed at the end of the month"[20] and the membership of the local unions. These statistics are, of course, open to the same criticism as those of the New York Department of Labor and Massachusetts Bureau of Labor, but they are greatly superior to the statistics collected by trade unions that have heretofore been considered. In January, 1915, forty of the sixty-five local unions of the Pattern Makers had less than fifty members each.[21] As was stated above, the secretaries of local unions with few members are able to determine the number of unemployed from personal knowledge. Moreover, several of the larger unions, two of which comprise over 20 per cent of the entire membership, pay out-of-work bene-

[19] The writer wishes to express his appreciation of the kindness of President Wilson of the Pattern Makers in placing at his disposal the reports from which these data have been obtained.

[20] Monthly Financial Statement and Trade and Statistical Report, December, 1914, p. 2.

[21] Ibid., January, 1915, pp. 6, 7.

fits,[22] and all of the local unions furnish out-of-work stamps free to the unemployed,[23] so that their secretaries, unlike those of most unions, have the opportunity of ascertaining the exact number of unemployed members with but little difficulty. The president of the union, too, takes great interest in the returns and where a local union attempts to conceal a good condition of trade by the return of an exaggerated number of unemployed, does not hesitate to correct the error. However, President Wilson states that, although the greater number of unions make fairly accurate returns, some associations overestimate the number of unemployed for the purpose of deterring the traveling members from transferring to them. Thus, in January, 1915, he pointed out that "one association this month reports that 20 per cent of its members are out of work while the truth is that all of its members are employed, and another union reports just about three times as many as are really idle."[24] As with the other data as to unemployment in trade unions, these figures include those unemployed from all causes.[25]

The following table shows the percentages of unemployment in the Pattern Makers' Union for the last working day of each month from April, 1907, to December, 1916:

UNEMPLOYMENT OF MEMBERS OF THE PATTERN MAKERS' UNION
(From Reports at the Union Headquarters)

Year	Percentage of Membership Unemployed on Last Working Day												
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Mean
1907	—	—	—	3.8	5.5	4.9	4.9	6.8	9.8	12.5	20.6	29.3	10.9
1908	28.6	29.4	28.1	22.6	27.1	26.4	25.6	23.7	22.5	21.7	17.1	16.7	24.1
1909	15.3	14.1	10.2	12.1	11.8	10.6	8.2	7.3	6.5	6.0	6.2	5.6	9.5
1910	4.8	3.9	5.5	4.3	4.4	5.1	5.5	7.8	8.1	11.1	10.6	11.3	6.8
1911	10.5	8.1	7.6	7.6	9.3	6.9	7.2	8.2	8.1	10.1	10.1	9.1	8.6
1912	7.4	6.3	6.5	5.2	5.0	4.9	4.6	4.5	4.3	3.8	3.8	4.8	5.1
1913	4.6	3.8	3.9	4.2	6.2	7.4	9.3	11.4	11.8	12.9	15.1	16.6	8.9
1914	14.0	12.5	11.9	11.3	11.6	13.1	12.8	15.6	20.3	23.8	23.9	19.9	15.9
1915	20.4	16.5	14.9	13.1	11.8	10.9	8.3	7.8	8.3	7.0	5.7	5.7	10.9
1916	5.8	6.8	6.3	6.6	6.5	5.6	6.0	6.6	7.1	5.9	4.7	3.9	5.2

[22] See p. 144.
[23] See p. 145.
[24] Monthly Financial Statement and Trade and Statistical Report, January, 1915, p. 2.
[25] In 1916 an average of 16.8 per cent of the members reported as unemployed were on strike.

It will be noted that the percentages are considerably lower than those of the other unions so far noted. In normal years the percentage of unemployment is between five and eight, but these figures are doubled in periods of industrial depression. The striking fact about the data of the Pattern Makers is the relative constancy of the figures from month to month; that is to say, the percentages show no sudden fluctuations from one month to the next as the unemployment statistics of a single trade generally do, but either rise or fall gradually during the periods of depression and prosperity. Thus, in 1915 the percentage was 20.4 in January and only 5.7 in December, but the percentages for the intervening months decreased gradually. The same slow movement of the percentage of unemployment occurred in 1907 when there was a gradual increase from 3.8 in April to 29.3 in December. This regularity in the returns probably indicates that the secretaries were more careful than in other unions to note slight fluctuations.

One of the most important conclusions to be drawn from the statistics of unemployment relates to the very great differences in the amount of unemployment among localities. The dominant industries of any two States are rarely the same, or even if the same, the proportions of workmen employed in the various industries are generally different. It is certainly true, for example, that the chief occupations of the workmen included in the Massachusetts returns are not identical with those of the workmen represented in the New York data. Even where the industries are the same in two States certain local peculiarities may affect the seasonal fluctuations and produce more unemployment in one state than in another.

The differences in unemployment among various States is illustrated by a comparison of the monthly fluctuations in the number of persons employed in manufactures. The census of manufacturers of 1909 shows that in ten States the minimum number of wage earners reported for any month in the year represented over 90 per cent of the maximum

number. In thirteen States the proportion was less than 80.0 per cent. The largest difference between the maximum and the minimum numbers employed is shown for Idaho, where the percentage was 63.3. This was due chiefly to the seasonal variations in the lumber industry which gave employment to more people than any other industry. In New Hampshire and Vermont, on the other hand, where the fluctuations in the various industries largely balance one another, the minimum numbers of wage earners reported were 94.3 and 93.3 per cent respectively, of the maximum numbers.[26]

The following table shows the relative fluctuations in unemployment in New York and Massachusetts. The percentage of fluctuation is calculated upon the base of the greatest number employed in any one month of the year:

MONTHLY FLUCTUATIONS OF EMPLOYMENT IN THE INDUSTRIES OF NEW YORK AND MASSACHUSETTS, 1909

(From the Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, vol. viii; Manufactures, p. 282)

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Mean
New York	10.1	8.7	6.8	6.9	7.5	7.8	8.1	6.1	2.1	—	0.4	1.7	6.02
Mass.....	7.6	6.6	5.4	5.8	5.9	6.0	6.5	5.2	2.9	1.8	1.4	—	5.01

The table shows that not only was there a greater fluctuation between the best and worst months of employment in New York than in Massachusetts, but that in New York the average of the other eleven months was 6.02 per cent less than in the busiest month, October, while in Massachusetts the average was only 5.01 per cent less than in December, the busiest month. In eight of the eleven months the percentage of fluctuation was over six in New York, while in Massachusetts the percentage was six or over in only four months.

Not only are the fluctuations in employment in the industries of two States taken as a whole often quite different,

[26] Thirteenth Census, 1910, vol. viii, p. 282.

but it frequently happens that the seasonal fluctuations in the same industry are different in two States. This arises chiefly out of climatic conditions although various local peculiarities play a large part. Thus, when the state of employment in the building trades of New York City is poor, Philadelphia may be erecting a number of large buildings and may need additional workmen. Indeed it may be said that the state of employment in certain trades is affected more by purely local variations than by seasonal and cyclical fluctuations. It will occasionally happen that in a particular city more building will be done during the winter than was done in the preceding summer. Even taking the labor market as a whole, the state of employment varies as much from one city to another as it does from one season to another. This fact is shown by the reports of the Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics on the state of employment in the various cities of the State. In March, 1915, for example, the percentage of unemployment for the entire State was 16.6; in Boston, it was 13.9, in Brockton, 27.6, in Holyoke, 25.2, in Lowell, 7.4, while in Quincy and Taunton it was only 4.1 and 4.7, respectively.[27] Thus, there was a total range of 23.5 from one city to another in the same State. The reports of the New York Department of Labor show that the state of employment is generally far worse in New York City than in other parts of the State.

The difference in the amount of unemployment among cities is illustrated by the statistics of "traveling" among trade unionists. Workmen do not move from one city to another because the general state of employment in their trade is poor, but because it is poor in the particular community in which they reside. It is true that some twenty years ago trade unionists traveled needlessly from one local union to another, but in consequence of the change in the attitude of the unions, the members are notified of the condition of trade in contiguous cities before they move, and if it appears to the secretary or business agent that the

[27] Twenty-ninth Quarterly Report on Unemployment in Massachusetts, March 31, 1915, p. 4.

UNEMPLOYMENT AND TRAVELING IN THE PATTERN MAKERS' UNION

Year	Month	Percentage Unemployed	Number of Members per 1,000 Transferred
1909	January	15.3	9
	February	14.1	15
	March	10.2	12
	April	12.1	17
	May	11.8	17
	June	10.6	16
	July	8.2	22
	August	7.3	24
	September	6.5	25
	October	6.0	28
	November	6.2	26
	December	5.6	15
1910	January	4.8	22
	February	3.9	18
	March	5.5	19
	April	4.3	26
	May	4.4	33
	June	5.1	29
	July	5.5	26
	August	7.8	28
	September	8.1	22
	October	11.1	21
	November	10.6	15
	December	11.3	16
1911	January	10.5	15
	February	8.1	11
	March	7.6	19
	April	7.6	21
	May	9.3	23
	June	6.9	19
	July	7.2	20
	August	8.2	19
	September	8.1	23
	October	10.1	36
	November	10.1	18
	December	9.1	12
1912	January	7.4	13
	February	6.3	20
	March	6.5	18
	April	5.2	21
	May	5.0	23
	June	4.9	24
	July	4.6	31
	August	4.5	27
	September	4.3	33
	October	3.8	23
	November	3.8	17
	December	4.8	22
1913	January	4.6	22
	February	3.8	19

UNEMPLOYMENT AND TRAVELING IN THE PATTERN MAKERS' UNION
(*Continued*)

Year	Month	Percentage Unemployed	Number of Members per 1,000 Transferred
1913	March	3.9	18
	April	4.2	23
	May	6.2	25
	June	7.4	21
	July	9.3	23
	August	11.4	18
	September	11.8	19
	October	12.9	14
	November	15.1	13
	December	16.6	12
1914	January	14.0	11
	February	12.5	10
	March	11.9	17
	April	11.3	13
	May	11.6	10
	June	13.1	16
	July	12.8	12
	August	15.6	13
	September	20.3	10
	October	23.8	7
	November	23.9	8
	December	19.9	9
1915	January	20.4	8
	February	16.5	10
	March	14.9	10
	April	13.1	12
	May	11.8	13
	June	10.9	17
	July	8.3	13
	August	7.8	21
	September	8.3	17
	October	7.0	16
	November	5.7	20
	December	5.7	18

member would not be bettering his chances of employment by transferring his residence, the workman is informed of the fact. The trade unionists, as will be shown in a later chapter, are relying more and more upon their unions to notify them of employment in other cities and consequently the movement that occurs at the present time is largely due to differences in the demand for labor in various cities. It has frequently been asserted in periods of depression that

the poor condition of trade forced many workmen to move from one city to another, but the contrary is true. This is clearly brought out by comparing the percentage of unemployment and the number of transfers issued per one thousand members in the Pattern Makers' Union, as shown in the table on pages 26 and 27.

The coefficient of correlation between the number unemployed and the number transferred is —.70. In other words, the percentage of unemployment varies inversely with the percentage of transfers issued. As unemployment increases, the number of workmen transferring from one city to another decreases, and vice versa. The percentage of transfers is governed by the fluctuations of employment between individual labor markets.

From the statistics of unemployment we are also able to make certain deductions as to the relative volume and character of unemployment in some of the principal trades. Cyclical fluctuations occur with some degree of regularity, the movement covering a period of four or five years. Thus, 1896, 1900, 1904, and 1908 were years in which the percentage of unemployment reached very high marks. These cyclical fluctuations affect all trades and industries. It appears that a depression generally causes an increase at the high point of 50 per cent over the number normally idle. Thus, in Massachusetts it appears that there was, on the average, 61 per cent more unemployment in 1908 and 1904 than in the intervening years while in New York there was, on the average, 50 per cent more unemployment in 1908 and 1914 than the average of the intervening years. The number unemployed does not register the full effect of a depression since short-time is more common in such periods. The amount of the weekly pay-roll would be a better measure, but the data are not obtainable. Industrial depressions affect the various trades in different degree. For instance, a period of depression causes an increase of 100 per cent in the number of unemployed in the building trades, while it causes increases of only 30 per cent in the

garment industry, 40 per cent in food and liquors, and practically none in some other trades and in public employment.

There are two methods by which the trade unions can alleviate the consequences of unemployment due to cyclical fluctuations: (1) distribution of employment and (2) unemployment insurance. It is obvious that the unions can of themselves do nothing to regularize industry. In periods of depression, their employment bureaus cannot have any great value, nor can they place their members in other occupations, because industries are generally affected. Equal distribution of employment and unemployment insurance appear to be the only means of meeting cyclical fluctuations. But, as will be pointed out in a later chapter, various forces operate against the establishment of the system of equal distribution of employment. Thus, in transportation and printing where a period of depression throws out of employment only about four per cent of the workmen, this number is not large enough to cause the unions to ask for an equal distribution of the work. The system is most used in those trades where the cyclical and seasonal fluctuations are the most violent. In the building trades, however, where the workmen change frequently from one employer to another, this method can be utilized only with great difficulty.

The most noticeable characteristic of the statistics is the wide fluctuation in the percentages of unemployment from month to month. In the New York data, which constitutes the only statistical information as to unemployment from month to month in all trades, the percentages for all trades taken together gradually dropped from January, the dullest month in the year, to September and October, and rose again in November and December. The good and bad seasons vary from one trade to another. Thus, the winter months furnish less employment in building trades and transportation, but more employment in clothing, textiles, boots and shoes, theatres and music. The differences among the various trades of the same industry are equally as im-

portant. For instance, in the garment industry, the dull seasons in dresses and waists coincide with the periods of fairly intense activity in the manufacture of petticoats. While the seasons of activity and dullness may be in general the same in some of the various industries, the duration and the intensity of the unemployment may be different. In the clothing industry the seasonal fluctuations are the greatest, for in some of its trades there is an almost complete stagnation in the dull season. On the average, it may be said that the dull season affects 80 per cent of the workmen in the clothing industry. In the building trades the fluctuations due to weather conditions mean the idleness of 20 per cent of the workmen in addition to the number normally idle. In metals and machinery and printing, the seasonal fluctuations are less, amounting to but three or four per cent of the workmen. In the brewing industry the seasonal fluctuations mean the employment of all workers on half time, while in theatres about 75 per cent of the workmen are unemployed during the summer months.

There are two chief remedies recommended for seasonal fluctuations: (1) the regularization of industry and (2) the dovetailing of occupations. While it is true that the trade unions could facilitate the regularization of industry by lowering their minimum rates in the dull seasons, there are certain considerations which make this solution undesirable to them. Moreover, this solution can only be achieved by cooperation with the employers.

The second remedy, the dovetailing of trades, has greater possibilities, although the trade unions have given it little attention. In a later chapter, it will be pointed out that only a few of the unions have provided for a free interchange of union cards. It was noted, however, in our examination of the statistics of the Flint Glass Workers union, that nearly one-half of those not engaged at their principal occupations were employed at other work. In this problem, as in others, the volume and character of the unemployment determine to a great extent the appropriate rem-

edy. It is obvious that the amount of dovetailing will be greatest in those trades where the slack seasons are most pronounced. The flint glass workers, the theatrical stage employees, and the glass bottle blowers, who realize that they will be unable to secure any employment at their main occupation during the dull seasons, look to other industries for employment to tide them over the slack period. On the other hand, where the fluctuations are less pronounced, and there is a greater chance for continued employment in the trade through the slack season, the workmen are reluctant to enter other industries and perform work which is more irksome for lower wages. This explains in great part why the longshoremen rarely enter other fields of employment even for short periods; there is always the chance that they can secure some work along the wharves.

In another group of trades, workmen are unable to dovetail occupations because there are no opportunities. The coal miners have no means of supplementing their earnings in dull seasons, and charity workers will testify to the fact that clothing workers are usually unable to secure work at other than the needle trades. Skilled workmen are reluctant to do unskilled work for fear that they will in some way destroy the knack of doing skilled work; it is only in a small number of cases that building trades workers secure employment in other occupations with somewhat lower wages. Thus, the extent to which resort is had to subsidiary occupations varies from trade to trade. In trades where the seasonal fluctuations are more pronounced, a considerable part of the number not employed at the trade are employed in some other occupation. In the highly skilled trades and in trades where the fluctuations are not very acute, the number is very much less.

The consequence of seasonal unemployment to the individual workmen may be alleviated by unemployment insurance, by relatively higher wages during employment, and by distribution of employment.

It has been noted that the periods of seasonal fluctuations

in many trades are well defined, and the workmen expect to be unemployed for a certain length of time each season. Unemployment insurance, in such cases, is not necessary unless the workmen have not the will to provide for these periods of idleness. It will be noted later that the Cigar Makers do not provide for the payment of out-of-work benefits during the seasonal periods of slackness.

It is a well recognized fact that wages are higher in trades which are affected by pronounced seasonal fluctuations than in trades embracing the same class of workmen but with greater regularity of employment. Thus, the hourly wages of bricklayers are considerably higher than the wages of carpenters; but the statistics of the New York Department of Labor show that the average yearly earnings in the two trades are about the same. Cabinet makers receive lower wages than carpenters partly, if not entirely, because they have more regular employment. The relatively high daily wages of members of building-trades unions are frequently used to indicate high yearly earnings, yet it is found that the latter are but little more than those in metals and machinery and slightly lower than in printing, where regular employment produces high yearly earnings although the daily wage is relatively low.

In a later chapter it will be shown that the unions depend chiefly upon the distribution of employment in meeting seasonal fluctuations, and that the volume and character of the unemployment play a considerable part in determining whether or not this method is available.

Apart from seasonal and cyclical unemployment there is a considerable amount of unemployment in certain trades which is due to the maladjustment of the labor supply among different localities. Against this form of unemployment, the unions have provided by the transfer of their members from one city to another. These methods are generally better established in trades where the local fluctuations are the greatest.

Finally, there is the form of unemployment which is

present at all times, caused either by a chronic oversupply of workmen in the trade or by the fact that workmen are sometimes forced to change their employers. The former cause is of importance only in those trades where the work is extremely casual as in the case of longshoremen. In this connection the unions have done little; indeed Barnes[28] points out that the unions of longshoremen in New York City have repeatedly refused the offers of the employers to place a certain number of the men on weekly wages.

The second form of unemployment, that due to the changing of employers, is of great importance in some trades, while in others it is not a serious problem. More time is lost in this manner in the building trades than in any other industry. The average building-trades worker secures employment on several jobs and under several employers during a season. Inasmuch as the periods of unemployment in such cases are generally short, unemployment insurance is of little value. The most important need is for employment bureaus. In a later chapter it will be noted that the unions have developed these agencies in proportion to the relative volume of such unemployment in their trades. Thus, in the building trades where the problem is the greatest, the office of business agent has been established. In other trades, as, for instance, the glass industry, where the problem is far less acute, the unions have done very little.

[28] Charles B. Barnes, The Longshoremen, pp. 74, 79, 102.

CHAPTER II

The Trade Union Theory of Unemployment

The American unions have adopted certain policies which have as their object a solution of the problem of unemployment. Some of these policies are based on fallacious reasoning, while others would produce a partial solution if the unions were able to exercise jurisdiction over a greater proportion of the working population than they now control. No one realizes the inadequacy of present policies better than the trade unionists, and they also realize that without the aid of the government, of the employers, and of the general public, they cannot deal successfully with the problem. As one trade-union official has said: "Of all the problems facing trade-union officials that of unemployment is the most difficult to handle."[1]

There are numerous union rules, regulations, customs, and policies which bear some relation to unemployment, but only those which show the union theory of unemployment will be considered here. Inasmuch as this theory has been developed from two main ideas, the regulation of the number of workmen among whom the employment is to be divided, and the increasing of the total amount of employment, the policies which have been chosen for discussion may be conveniently classified under these two heads.

Unions generally regard the amount of work which is to be done as a fixed quantity. Their chief concern, therefore, is the number of workmen among whom the employment is to be divided. The problem of unemployment would be, in great measure, solved, in their opinion, could they but regulate the number of workmen in the country and in each trade. Thus, the unions have been the strongest

[1] Typographical Journal, January, 1915, p. 42.

agitators for a restriction of immigration. They maintain that as the population of the country increases the chances for employment lessen and there is less amount of employment per capita. In the same manner they appear to think that by the abolition of the manufacture of goods by convict and child labor the per capita amount of work will be increased. In short, the union theory of unemployment is built upon the doctrine which economists have termed the "work fund" theory.

In view of the existence of such union theories, it is not surprising that a great number of unions have placed restrictions upon the admission of workmen to their organizations. The editor of the Bridge and Structural Iron Workers Journal has stated the common union view as follows: "As a general proposition with us we appear to think that a new applicant means another person to apply for the various jobs."[2]

Not all of the unions have adopted the policy of limiting their membership; many are willing to receive as members practically all who are employed at the trade. But, where a local union has the field sufficiently organized to successfully deal with the employers, very little effort is made to secure additional members. In some of the large cities it is very difficult to obtain admission to a building-trades union. In such cases it is felt that workmen have the local situation so well in hand that the presence of even a considerable number of unorganized workmen can have little influence in their dealings with the employers.

A few local unions in various trades make their admission fees high as a barrier to deter the unorganized from joining. Initiation fees of $50.00, $75.00 and even $100.00 are found in a few highly organized unions, and this amount must be paid before the workmen are given their working cards. Another method of keeping the unorganized out of the union is to make the conditions of the examination such that it is very difficult for ordinary workmen to pass it.

[2] Bridgemen's Magazine, 1908, p. 848.

The New York local union of Steam Fitters limits its membership by this method. The requirements of the examination are said to be of such a nature that a majority of the members of the union could not pass it. Other unions have gone further and have absolutely refused to consider applications. While this is a policy of only two or three national unions, it is practised in a great number of local unions of various trades. These local unions have a sufficient number of members to maintain relations with the employers and are extremely reluctant to receive any new members, even upon application. A still greater number of local unions do not make any serious efforts to organize their trade. Thus, a business agent informed the writer that he made no effort to secure new members and, further, that he attempted to persuade applicants not to join the union unless work was very plentiful.[8]

The union apprenticeship policies are dominated by the same ideas. The unions seek to perpetuate the custom of apprenticeship with its accompanying rules, primarily, in order that the supply of labor may be regulated and, secondarily, that capable workmen may be produced. Although there is no desire to minimize the purpose of the unions to produce efficient workmen by the system of apprenticeship, it is obvious that this is subordinate to the desire to restrict the number working at the trade. In those trades in which the system of apprenticeship exists, a considerable amount of unemployment is frequently traced by the unions to the admission of too many apprentices. Thus, an official of the Photo-Engravers reported in 1915: "We fully agree that one of the chief contributing factors that have been the cause of so much unemployment in our trade has been a too liberal apprentice ratio which is turning out more journeymen than the trade can absorb. The industry is not growing as rapidly as it has in the past and the new time and labor saving methods and processes are aggravating this situation. . . . We therefore . . . urge this convention to alter our

[8] Interview, February, 1913.

existing ratio of apprentices so as to be more restrictive."[4] Trade unionists generally believe that if the unions were allowed to fix the ratio of apprentices to journeymen, the problem of unemployment would be greatly lessened. Thus, the president of the Plumbers said in 1900: "I believe that the future prosperity of our trade lies in restricting the vast number of apprentices that are at present employed. The supply is greater than the demand and therefore in accordance with the other lines of trade we should endeavor to restrict the number of apprentices until such time as our older members have an opportunity to earn a livelihood."[5] In the majority of trade conferences, such as those in the glass industry, the subject of apprenticeship is one of the most important topics of discussion. The unions demand that the ratio be reduced while the employers desire an increase. Frequently the unions have laid as much stress upon this point as upon wages and other working conditions.

The relation between restriction of numbers and the avoidance of unemployment is illustrated by the policies of certain unions when trade is very active. In such cases the unions occasionally remove the barriers to membership in order to furnish employers with the desired number of workmen. They receive these men into the union upon the payment of the customary initiation fee, but are careful to accept as members only enough to meet the demands of the employers. In other cases the unions do not accept as regular members those workmen who are needed by reason of an increased demand. For instance, the Elevator Constructors, which has limited its membership more successfully than any other American union, utilizes the so-called "permit" system. A Chicago contractor stated in 1904 that "in busy times the Union (Elevator Constructors) will not admit new members so that all of its members, even the poorest, may be able to obtain employment," and that this resulted in a shortage of efficient men.[6]

[4] American Photo-Engraver, October, 1915, pp. 467–468.
[5] Proceedings, 1900, p. 15.
[6] Eleventh Special Report of the Commissioner of Labor, 1904, p. 333.

When a local union of the Elevator Constructors is forced by the employers to find additional workmen, it secures men who have had experience in elevator construction, or structural and ornamental iron workers, machinists, carpenters, and electricians. The work is of such a character that under the guidance of experienced elevator constructors these workmen of closely allied trades can be utilized very satisfactorily. But these men are not required to join the union. Indeed, in the greater number of cases they are not admitted. They are given "permits" which are valid for one or two weeks. If their services are needed after this time the permits are renewed, but if employment is not plentiful the men are released. For these permits the union charges the sum of 25 or 50 cents per day. The rules of the Chicago local union provide that "when the condition of trade makes it impossible to furnish employers with the necessary help from among the regular members, the business agent shall have power to issue permits to the members of other trades who may be competent to do the work. These permits may be withdrawn at any time by the business agent."[7]

President Murphy of the Elevator Constructors says that in 1912 the New York local union was working three hundred and fifty permit men at one time.[8] Nor are the fluctuations which require additional men of short duration. The secretary reported in 1908 that the Philadelphia local union had had an average of twenty-five permit men for two months, and added: "now that trade is dull, the permit men are being dispensed with to make room for the regular members who are out of work."[9] When asked as to the union's motive in using the permit system to such an extent, President Murphy stated that the main reason was the desire to maintain the number of members at such a point that all would be steadily employed throughout the year.[10]

[7] Constitution, 1914, art. 8, sec. 16.
[8] Interview, August, 1915.
[9] Elevator Constructor, 1908, p. 23.
[10] Interview, August, 1915.

Partly on account of the great seasonal fluctuations, partly as a result of the policy of equal distribution of employment during the dull seasons, and partly on account of the fear of prohibition and local option laws, the Brewery Workers also use the permit system.[11] During the summer a large force of extra workmen is needed in all breweries. By reason of the policy of the union respecting the restriction of membership, the supply of workmen is not sufficient to cope with this extra work. The union, which has practically complete control of the trade, has been given the power to designate the workmen to fill all vacancies. Accordingly, the union secures unemployed members of other unions, generally from those trades which experience seasonal unemployment during the summer months. The character of the work is such that no previous experience is required. These additional workmen are given permits which are revocable at any time on demand of the business agent. The fees charged the permit men are the same as the dues paid by the regular members.

In the Flint Glass Workers there has been a shortage of mould makers on frequent occasions since 1901. Inasmuch as the periods during which a scarcity of men has existed have been of short duration, the union has refused to allow the employers to increase the ratio of apprentices to journeymen. As a substitute, President Voitle of the Flint Glass Workers in 1902 advised that the manufacturers be permitted to employ members of the Machinists' union to do patching. Such workmen, however, were not to become members of the union, but to pay the regular assessments on their earnings. Furthermore, the permits of the machinists were to be revoked not later than June 30, 1902.[12] It appears that this proposal was not adopted as a general rule, although it was put into practice in several shops.

In 1904 the manufacturers again complained of a scarcity of mould makers and it was proposed that members of the Machinists' Union be given permits to do this class of

[11] Interview with Secretary Proebstle, August, 1915.
[12] Proceedings, 1902, pp. 60–61.

work. President Rowe in speaking of the proposition said:

"I believe that if we extend relief to the bottle-mould shops where it is badly needed at the present time, we should carefully measure the number required to furnish the relief necessary, and we should confine that relief for one or two years to the common grade of work. If at the expiration of the period of one or two years, we are unable to fill the places with mould makers competent to do the work, we should then teach the trade to the machinists with permits, and when they become competent workmen we should admit them to membership. I favor this plan in preference to admitting more apprentices. If we admit more apprentices we will have them on our trade at all times, owing to the fact that they have learned no other trade. We should arrange specifications whereby the machinists could be put off in case of slackness in trade and they would have another trade to go to in case it was best for the interests of the workers to have them put off."[13]

The permit system was put into operation by the Flint Glass Workers in many factories, but it was not until 1914 that a general rule was adopted. The convention of that year made the following provision: "In the case of a shortage of mould makers and the American Flint Glass Workers' Union is unable to supply the men within a reasonable period of time . . . the shop committee shall have the privilege of drawing labor from the International Association of Machinists, and all those engaged under such circumstances shall pay assessments into our Union and comply with our rules, with the distinct understanding that labor drawn in this manner, if working at a time when work becomes slack, shall be the first to be laid off before there is a division of time."[14]

In the building trades the permit system is in operation in a great many local unions. The Bridge and Structural Iron Workers issue permits to sheet metal workers, metal lathers, and boiler makers when there is a scarcity of union iron workers. The Carpenters frequently allow so-called "hatchet-and-saw" men to work on permits during the busy season and the Plasterers obtain "handy-men" to aid them in their work. The local unions of Chicago and New

[13] Proceedings, 1904, pp. 133–134.
[14] Proceedings, 1914, p. 193.

York have been the chief centers of the permit system. It is common knowledge among unionists that at one time it was extremely difficult to obtain membership in any of the building-trades unions of Chicago and New York.

The Steam and Hot Water Fitters have utilized the permit system in various forms. President Short of the Building Trades Department said in 1911 that "the conditions in Chicago at the first of the year were such that it was deemed advisable for the United Association of Plumbers to organize a local union of steam fitters, as theretofore it was impossible for a journeyman steam fitter to obtain admission into the organization to which he should belong. Instead of being given membership in the Steam Fitters' Union he was compelled to work under a so-called permit system. His permit would be renewed from week to week and a certain fee was charged for it."[15] While the present steam fitters' local unions of the United Association of Plumbers do not arbitrarily refuse to admit efficient journeymen into the union, they do use the permit system for helpers, and to a certain extent, for journeymen. When there is a scarcity of journeymen steam fitters, the union issues journeyman permits to its most efficient helpers, and in turn issues permits to handy men to take the places of the helpers who have been temporarily promoted. Such permits are revocable at the desire of the business agent. When work becomes dull, the permit journeymen are reduced in rank to helpers and the permit helpers are given their release. The fees charged the helpers on permit vary from 25 to 50 cents per day, while the regular helper pays only $1.30 per month. A business agent of the Steam Fitters said he attempted to secure each season as helpers on permit men who had worked in this capacity before, and generally the men who have worked on permits return the next season for the same privilege.[16]

A great part of the jurisdictional disputes among the

[15] Proceedings, Building Trades Department of the American Federation of Labor, 1911, p. 37.
[16] Interview, December, 1915.

unions is directly attributable to the "work fund" theory. Each union strives zealously to increase its jurisdiction, since the members expect thereby to increase their field of employment and thereby to increase the per capita amount of work for the members. But the unions carry this idea further. It is a well known fact that a great number of workmen are capable of working at more than one trade. Such men would be able to greatly decrease their periods of unemployment by transferring from the trade in which they have been thrown out of work to a trade in which they could secure work. When, however, a member of a union attempts to transfer either for a short period or permanently to another union, he is compelled, with few exceptions, to pay the same initiation fee as an unorganized workman.[17] Very few unions allow the interchange of cards. The only exceptions appear to be the reciprocity agreements between the Bricklayers, Masons and Plasterers and the Operative Plasterers, the Western Federation of Miners and the United Mine Workers, the Maintenance of Way Employees and Carpenters, the Carmen and the Painters, the Glass Bottle Blowers and the Flint Glass Workers, and to a limited extent, the Ladies' Garment Workers and the United Garment Workers. A member of the Commercial Telegraphers, for example, is not recognized by the Railroad Telegraphers although the work performed by the members of both organizations is practically the same, and there is much transferring between the two industries.[18]

Those unions which are organized on the basis of industry, instead of trade, furnish the most flagrant examples of this situation. The work of the members of the Stationary Firemen and Steam Engineers is the same as that performed by some members of the Brewery Workers, the Western Federation of Miners, and the United Mine Workers. But, there is no permanent interchange of cards between these organizations. A member of the Teamsters cannot secure employment at his trade in the brewing or

[17] The Bridgemen's Magazine, December, 1903, p. 5.
[18] Interview, August, 1915.

mining industries until he withdraws from the Teamsters' Union and joins the Brewery Workers or Miners. When one considers the number of industries in which the average mechanic works during a year it is obvious that the industrial union form of organization, unless some change were made in present rules, would be less adapted to combat the problem of unemployment than the trade union. Under a system of organization by trade, a member of a union is free to work in any industry provided that he is employed at his customary trade, but the field of employment of a member of an industrial union is limited to one particular industry.

From time to time in various unions, some of whose members have been capable of working at more than one trade, or in more than one industry, there have been campaigns for reciprocal recognition of the cards of certain unions. During the past few years a number of such agreements have been made. Some unionists have gone further and advocated a Universal Card System, under which a union card would be accepted by a local union in any trade, provided that the initiation fees of both local unions are the same. The chief argument advanced by the promoters of the reciprocal agreements between particular unions and of the Universal Card System has been that when a workman is compelled to change his occupation he is generally in need of funds, and this is a most inopportune time for him to pay an initiation fee. Certainly the fact that he is compelled to pay a new initiation fee has forced many a workman to relinquish the hope of securing employment under the jurisdiction of another union.

In some unions there exists the practice of granting seniority rights and privileges to certain members. Under this system when employment slackens, those members who have been longest employed are given preference by being employed at full time while other members are laid off. The system of seniority rights exists, to a certain extent, in many unions, but only in the Railroad Brotherhoods and in the Printers is it in general practice.

The Typographical Union established its priority rules in 1892. These provided that the oldest competent substitute should have the first vacancy and when the working force was to be decreased such decrease was to be accomplished by discharging first the person or persons last employed. Furthermore, when an increase in the force was desired, the persons displaced should be reinstated in the reverse order in which they had been discharged.[19]

This rule has been attacked from the outset. The objections made to it have been summarized by Professor Barnett as follows: (1) The power of men of superior efficiency to secure employment in preference to workmen of fair skill is greatly lessened. (2) The incentive to high efficiency on the part of the employee is lessened. (3) The employer is less likely to pay superior workmen more than the minimum rate, for, if they leave his service, they must begin at the bottom of the list in some other office. (4) The distribution of work is curtailed, for the foreman is unwilling to permit inferior men to "sub," for they would thus acquire priority rights in the office. (5) The mobility of labor is decreased, for a substitute with priority rights in one office cannot accept a situation in another office without losing his rights in the first.[20]

The defenders of the priority rule claim that it was established to guarantee equality of rights; that before it became effective situations were given out regardless of the seniority of candidates for vacancies; that under it a situation holder is secure in his position, while the first substitute in the office is assured in time of promotion to a position as regular; that it prevents members who are subbing from securing situations through favoritism; and that it tends to reward long and faithful service.[21] At various times there

[19] Proceedings, 1892, p. 135.

[20] George E. Barnett, "The Printers: A study in American Trade Unionism," in American Economic Association Quarterly, third series, vol. 10, no. 3, p. 241.

[21] George A. Stevens, "The History of Typographical Union Number Six," in Annual Report of the New York Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1911, Part 1, pp. 529–530.

have been efforts to abolish the system, but each time the attack has failed. The New York local union in 1908 pointed out that the priority rule "has had a fair chance to prove its merits in New York City and we are firmly convinced that a continuance of its enforcement will prove disastrous to the Union."[22]

It appears that the system has undergone considerable changes which its promoters did not anticipate. President Lynch said in 1911 that "there has been a gradual and determined application of the priority rule in a broader and broader sense until the danger-point has been reached, and in many jurisdictions it is not now a question of competency which determines the man for a particular position but a question of priority. The priority law has been in countless instances a great protection of our members, but instances are also on record where priority laws have been used to protect the incompetent to the demoralization of the composing room and to the discredit of the local union."[23]

In the various Railroad Brotherhoods seniority rights and privileges are in effect. The men are classified in certain groups in order of seniority, and the men last taken on are not entitled to any work until the men in the various groups are receiving runs totaling a certain number of miles. Thus, in periods of depression the young men are placed on the extra list and receive employment only after those with greater seniority rights earn a certain amount of money per month. This system has led to considerable discussion in the Brotherhoods, but the older men appear to be firmly entrenched and the younger men, realizing that some day they will have the same priority rights as the older men now enjoy, do not strongly object. In some cases the system has led to gross inequalities in employment. Thus, it was said in 1915 that one-fourth of the total membership of the Locomotive Engineers were "extra" men, and that during the previous seven years on a certain division of the North-

[22] Ibid., p. 530.
[23] Reports of Officers and Proceedings of the Fifty-seventh Session, 1911, p. 39.

ern Pacific Railroad, the "extra" men did not average over $75.00 per month, while those with greater seniority rights averaged $175.00 per month.[24]

Some unions have gone farther than acquiring seniority rights for the trade over which they have jurisdiction, and have created rights in subsidiary trades. Thus, when it becomes necessary to reduce the number of locomotive engineers on the engineers' working lists, those thus taken off who have been promoted from the ranks of firemen in any seniority district, may, if they so desire, displace any fireman who is their junior in that seniority district.[25] It is said that during the depression of 1914 one third of the engineers on some railroads took the places of firemen, who in turn displaced "hostlers."[26]

The American unions have attempted to solve the problem of unemployment also by the adoption of policies of another kind, which, it was thought, would tend either to increase the total amount of employment or to distribute the employment over a greater number of their members. Such policies are (1) restriction of output, (2) shortening of the normal day, and (3) regulation of overtime.

The policy of restriction of output is justified by a number of unions as a method by which employment may be increased. The desire to "make the work go round" is prevalent chiefly in trades which experience extreme seasonal fluctuations, and where the output is restricted in order to "make the seasons longer." The instances of union regulations for the systematic restriction of output are not very numerous, despite the fact that the inducements to adopt such policies are very great. Fifteen years ago, a number of unions provided in their constitutions for a restriction of output, but only a few have maintained such policies to the present time. The force of public opinion and the increasing disinclination of the employers to

[24] Locomotive Engineers' Journal, January, 1915, p. 36.

[25] Chicago Joint Agreement between the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen, May 17, 1913, art. 11.

[26] Locomotive Engineers' Journal, March, 1915, pp. 224–225.

bargain with the unions that openly declared for restriction forced these unions to abandon such policies. Two of the most glaring and, perhaps, most important illustrations of restriction of output which are sanctioned by the national unions, are those of the Printers and the Machinists.

The Typographical Union prohibits the loaning, borrowing, purchase or sale of news matter in type, linotype, matrix or plate form, or of miscellaneous matter or cuts in small forms between newspapers of a city. Furthermore, the loaning, borrowing, exchange, purchase or sale of matter or matrices, or cuts of advertisements, by one local newspaper to another is prohibited, except that when the matrices of advertisements are furnished by one local newspaper to another, the text shall be reproduced within one week from the time of publication as nearly like the original as possible, made up, read, corrected, and proofs be submitted to the chairman for inspection.[27] This rule has been characterized as "job making" of the most despotic sort, and, although some justification has been attempted for the rule which requires the resetting of advertising matter, a great many of the members of the union criticize the rules on the ground that the only reason for their enforcement is the desire to "make work."

The International Association of Machinists in 1901, prohibited its members from operating more than one machine.[28] The one-man-one-machine rule, however, is not operative when the machines require no special skill to supervise them or are double machines. This rule had its genesis in an unwritten law which prevailed in the trade before the organization of the machinists. And indeed, many employers do not now object to the rule when it is applied to establishments which make large machinery, because in these establishments two machines cannot be effectively operated by a single workman. However, in shops making smaller work, the rule operates as a restriction of output, for often one man is capable of operating more than

[27] Constitution, 1915, sec. 168.
[28] Constitution, 1901, art. 22, sec. 2.

one machine. Thus, while the one-man-one-machine rule of the Machinists is justified in a great number of cases, there are other instances where its operation is merely a method of "making work." The union explains that the purpose of the rule is the physical protection of the workman, but it seems clear that this is not the only motive. An officer of the union said in 1901: "We prevented the introduction of the two-machine system in 137 shops, employing 9,500 men, and it is safe to say that if this system had been introduced the force of men would have been reduced one-eighth; hence, in this we have saved the positions of 1,188 men."[29]

These two examples are by no means the only instances of restriction of output in American unions. Thus, a curious regulation of the Plumbers for increasing the consumption of time is the prohibition upon its members of "the use of the bicycle and motorcycle during working hours."[30] A business agent when asked for the justification of this rule stated that "a plumber could cover twice as many jobs that way." The Baltimore local union of Plumbers prohibits its members from telephoning to the employer when they are "out jobbing to know if there are any more jobs in the neighborhood."[31]

In the majority of trades there are unwritten regulations for the determination of the daily "stint." And, in the greater number of cases, they have been handed down from one generation of members to another. They are not incorporated in any constitutions or working rules, but there is a tacit understanding among the members as to what constitutes a day's work. Frequently these restrictions exist to the same extent among non-unionists in the same trades.

However, there are frequent instances where local unions have formulated definite schedules under which the output has been restricted. Thus, in May, 1899, the Chicago local

[29] Eleventh Special Report of the Commissioner of Labor, 1904, p. 143.
[30] Constitution, 1913, sec. 125.
[31] Working Rules of Local Union, Number 48, 1914, art. 12.

union of Plumbers adopted a set of working rules which specified the amount of work which was to be considered a day's work. When a journeyman was working on lead work, eight wiped joints should constitute a day's work, and "when finishing on flats, apartments, hotel or office buildings, one fixture shall be considered an average day's work, except in the case of laundry tubs, when each apartment shall constitute one fixture."[32] The outcome of the adoption of these rules was a general lockout in February, 1900, and this device for restricting output was abandoned, although President Kelley of the Plumbers stated that the rules were formulated in order to prevent "rushing."[33]

To sum up, it may be said that policies of systematic restriction of output do not exist to a great extent in American unions. Generally speaking, those rules which are in force have not been dictated by selfish or sectional class interests alone, but by the desire to prevent a speeding up of the workmen which threatens physical injury. It is not desired, however, to minimize the importance of that aspect of the problem which has to do with the desire to "make the work go round." It is generally admitted by unionists that this is an important motive for the maintenance of such policies. The ever-present fear of being thrown out of work leads the workmen to reduce output in order to make the work last as long as possible.

It is very doubtful whether restriction of output affects to any extent the amount of unemployment. If restriction were applied only in seasons of depression, such might be the effect, but restriction of output on the part of individual workmen generally occurs in periods of prosperity. The employers maintain that in busy times men work at a more leisurely pace than they do in dull times, and the reason for this difference is obvious. When every member of the local union is employed and there is need for additional workmen, some workmen do no more than is absolutely neces-

[32] Report of the Industrial Commission, 1901, vol. 8, p. 407.
[33] Ibid., p. 966.

sary because they do not fear immediate discharge. On the other hand, however, when only two-thirds of the trade is employed, the other third being idle but anxious to secure work, the workmen who have employment will exert themselves to do all they can, knowing that many unemployed men are waiting for any vacancy that may occur.

Closely linked with the policy of restriction of output, as a means of partially solving the problem of unemployment, is the union policy of decreasing the working hours of the normal day. Unionists and unorganized workmen have, at all times, demanded the reduction of the hours of labor. While the unorganized workmen have not succeeded as well, the unions have, to a very considerable extent, secured the eight-hour day.[34]

The unions, in their demands for a shorter working day, have developed their argument along two lines. For the benefit of the employers and the general public, the unions offer as exhibits, the case of those members employed at hazardous occupations which require uninterrupted attention in order to guard against physical injury, and that of the workmen employed at tasks which consist of performing the same operation several thousand times during the day. They depict such workmen returning home, after working ten or more hours, physically exhausted. They demand for their members such working conditions that there may be "eight hours for work, eight hours for rest, and eight hours for what we will." It is argued that the increased productivity which will result from the shortening of the working day will more than compensate them for the increase in the hourly wages. On the other hand, the unions frequently offer a different explanation to their members of their desire for the shorter day. They are told that to decrease the working hours is the one sure way to solve

[34] Of the 21,165 union members reporting to the Wisconsin Federation of Labor in 1913, 11,552, or 54.6 per cent had secured a normal working day of eight hours or less. The average daily working hours for the entire number was 8¾ ("Labor Conditions in Wisconsin," Second Report by the Executive Board of the Wisconsin State Federation of Labor, July 1, 1914, p. 13).

the problem of unemployment. Thus President O'Connell of the Machinists said in 1901: "There are 150,000 machinists in this country, and an hour taken off their day's labor would give employment to 16,666 more machinists."[35] Thus the problem would be solved. The average workman, who has been working ten hours a day, appears to believe this. He thinks that if his normal day were reduced from ten to eight hours, his output would certainly not be the same, and thus work would be furnished for his unemployed fellow members. This aspect of the question makes a great impression upon the workman. It is said that during a discussion of the eight-hour day at union meetings, references to the opportunities for study and for more recreation which a shorter work day would bring, result only in a modicum of applause, while a word picture of the horrors of unemployment rarely fails to elicit the tumultuous appreciation of the audience.[36]

Such illustrations are not fanciful. The American Federation of Labor has adopted, according to an expositor, the principle that "the movement to reduce the hours of labor is not to shirk the duty of toil, but as the humane means by which the workless workers may find the road to employment."[37] The Plumbers provide in their constitution that eight hours shall constitute a normal working day, and explain that "inasmuch as the business throughout the country is insufficient to furnish employment to more than 50 or 75 per cent of the journeymen, and recognizing that by reducing the hours of labor it will have a tendency to keep more men employed, the Saturday half-holiday is recommended to all local unions."[38] President Kelley of the Plumbers in 1900 set forth the union theory of the shorter working day in its barest form as follows: "When our members decrease the number of working hours of a given day it simply means that more of them will be provided with

[35] Machinists' Journal, April, 1901, p. 199.
[36] Isaac H. Mitchell, "The Unemployed Problem," in The Nineteenth Century, July, 1905, p. 117.
[37] The Bridgemen's Magazine, January, 1910, p. 9.
[38] Constitution, 1913, secs. 118–119.

employment, and as a consequence, as we relieve the market of its unemployed surplus, we simply provide for the unfailing operation of the law of supply and demand, and through this means make possible the inevitable demand that will be created for our labor."[39]

The Painters at their convention in 1913 adopted the following resolution: "Inasmuch as the average painter is employed not more than seven or eight months in a year, and as the only permanent remedy for this condition lies in the proportionate shortening of the working day, we instruct the Executive Board to do all in its power to put into substantial effect the six-hour day."[40] Secretary McGuire of the Carpenters and Joiners as early as 1888 said that "by reducing the hours of labor we are furnishing employment for our unemployed"[41]; and the Editor of the Bridge and Structural Iron Workers' journal probably stated succinctly the union's belief when he said: "Trade unions shorten the hours of labor to place more men at work."[42]

While a great number of trade unionists still hold this belief in the effect of the eight-hour day on unemployment, some of them have changed their former attitude. In 1898 President Gompers of the American Federation of Labor stated that "in every industry where the hours of labor have been reduced through the efforts of organized labor, it has been followed by these results: wages have been increased, periods or seasons of employment have been lengthened and the number of unemployed has been reduced."[43] But in 1915, in "The Philosophy of the Shorter Working Day," he says that "the individual production of the short-hours, highly-paid worker is vastly greater than that of the long-hours worker."[44] If this is accepted as true, no employment has been created for those out of work. Likewise, the attitude of President Duncan of the Granite Cutters has under-

[39] Proceedings, 1900, p. 14.
[40] Proceedings, 1913, p. 631.
[41] Proceedings, 1888, p. 18.
[42] Bridgemen's Magazine, March, 1914, p. 149.
[43] Leather Workers' Journal, September, 1898, p. 4.
[44] American Federationist, March, 1915, p. 167.

gone a considerable change. Writing in 1909 he said: "It was to help in the elimination of poverty that organized workmen agitated for a reduction of the working hours per day, and the fact that they now enjoy a shorter work day gives employment to many who, under the old method, would be idle, and each person so employed is a step in the trade union campaign against poverty."[45] But in 1914 he stated that the reduction of the hours in the Granite Cutters from ten to nine, and then to eight, had neither lengthened the seasons of employment nor given work to those unemployed.[46]

Trade unionists have, in the past few years, come to realize that not only is their explanation of the effect of a shorter working day on unemployment false in theory, but that it did not work in practice. With but few exceptions, the officials and members admit that the eight-hour day has not decreased unemployment. The explanation is made that the individual production is the same in both cases. President Gompers of the American Federation of Labor has stated that "there has been no diminution of output by reason of the reduction of hours from ten to eight. In not a few cases the output has not varied from the results of ten hours, the number of human workers remaining the same in proportion."[47] It is only in the building trades that the workmen still claim that the output in an eight-hour day is less than under the ten-hour day, and here in a few trades, especially those of the plumbers and the painters, it appears that this is true.[48]

[45] Bridgemen's Magazine, January, 1910, p. 14.
[46] Granite Cutters' Journal, August, 1914, p. 2.
[47] Brauer-Zeitung, March 25, 1911, p. 1.
[48] For an account of the results which have been obtained in several large establishments through a reduction of the working hours from ten to eight per day, the reader is referred to a most instructive article, "The Eight-Hour Day," by C. J. Morrison in the Engineering Magazine, December, 1915, pp. 363–366. Mr. Morrison shows that manufacturers have limited their working day to an eight-hour basis without diminution of output; indeed, in some cases, more goods were produced under the eight-hour day and at lower costs. For other accounts of the results of the operation of the eight-hour day, the reader is referred to Thomas K. Urdahl, "The Normal Day

The question of the regulation of overtime is closely connected with that of the shortening of the normal day. When a union has secured a reduction of working hours, it is extremely reluctant to allow its members to work overtime. A member working overtime is looked upon as receiving employment which should be given to those out of work. Thus, President Woll of the Photo-Engravers deprecates the "unjust practice of some of the members who work excessive overtime while others are denied the opportunity of employment."[49] The Cincinnati, Ohio, local union of Bricklayers and Masons explains that its members are prohibited from working overtime because "the object of regular hours is to afford work for as many as possible."[50]

In order to discourage the employers from resorting to overtime, the unions have demanded that a wage rate considerably higher than that paid for work performed during the normal day, should be paid for all overtime. Generally, "time-and-half" is asked, although in certain cases overtime is paid for at "double-time." A few unions have gone further and prohibited their members from working overtime, except under certain circumstances. Thus, the Granite Cutters provide that "overtime is not to be worked except in cases of emergency, such as the spoiling or breaking of stone, delay in quarrying large sizes, where a stone is required to finish a building or where an accident has happened."[51] The Metal Polishers prohibit members from working overtime unless all vacancies are filled, and then only when overtime is absolutely necessary.[52] The Spinners prohibit members from working overtime under any circumstances.[53]

The emphasis laid upon the restrictions on overtime as

in Coal Mines," in the Proceedings of the First Annual Meeting of the American Association for Labor Legislation, 1907, pp. 50 et seq., and to the American Labor Legislation Review, March, 1914, pp. 106, 107 and pp. 117–119.

[49] American Photo-Engraver, October, 1915, p. 469.

[50] Constitution, 1912, art. 9, sec. 9.

[51] Constitution, 1912, sec. 95.

[52] Constitution, 1913, art. 35, sec. 8.

[53] Proceedings, 1913, p. 9.

a means of increasing employment is further illustrated by the rules of certain unions which provide that when a member works overtime, he shall at some future time lay off an equal amount of time. The Printers have formulated a rule, known as the "six-day-law," which prohibits its members from working more than forty-eight hours per week, if a substitute is available. Should a printer, through inability to secure a substitute, work a greater number than six days in any one week, or whenever his overtime aggregates eight hours, he is forced to give the first available substitute the opportunity to work the exact number of hours which his accumulated overtime amounts to. The local unions are allowed to specify the period during which this extra time is to accumulate, provided that it is not less than thirty days.[54]

The Railroad Brotherhoods limit the mileage or earnings of members when other members are unemployed. The engineers, for example, who are on "work-lists" are placed in one of three classes, (1) pooled or chain gang freight, (2) extra road, or (3) extra switching. In the busy season the men are transferred from one list to another to suit the demand. The crews in each class are given runs in the order in which they arrive at the terminal from previous runs, and so long as the men in the various classes are securing regular employment and there are none unemployed, they are not limited to a certain amount of work. But when the earnings of some men exceed a certain amount, while others who rightly belong in that class are unemployed, or are receiving less than a certain amount, a limit is placed upon the individual members. Thus, those in pooled or chain gang freight service cannot average more than three thousand miles per month; those on the extra road list are limited to the equivalent of twenty-two hundred miles per month; and those in extra switching service are not allowed more than twenty-two days work in a month. The result of these rules is that whenever the

[54] Constitution, 1915, sec. 105.

average earnings exceed the various amounts while there are members unemployed, a sufficient number of workmen must be added to the list to bring the earnings within the proper limit.[55]

While one of the motives for the regulation of overtime in all unions has been the desire to give work to the unemployed, there has also been present in the seasonal trades, the idea that a regulation of the working day would tend to shorten the seasons of unemployment. Especially has this been the case in the building trades. President Duncan, of the Granite Cutters, for many years has exhorted the local unions to abolish all overtime, and thus force the employers to give up the custom of rushing the work in summer in order to close down the entire plant in winter.[56] In the building trades, even during periods in which there are few unemployed, the local unions are generally unwilling to have their members work overtime.

The actual results of the abolition of overtime in lengthening the working season have been entirely contrary, in the greater number of cases, to what was expected by the unions. The unions have failed to understand that even if less were produced in the eight-hour day than in a longer working day, the natural tendency would be for the employers to increase their working force rather than the length of the season. In the building trades, for instance, were the employers unable, through the shortening of the normal day and the abolition of overtime, to complete their building operations in the customary season, they would be forced to employ more men. And inasmuch as all of the building trades mechanics are generally employed during this season, the employers would recruit their forces by securing workmen from other industries. Such workmen would, therefore, be thrown upon the industry in the majority of cases, and would have to be taken care of in the dull seasons.

[55] Chicago Joint Agreement between the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen, May 17, 1913, art. 11.

[56] Granite Cutters' Journal, February, 1914, p. 4.

CHAPTER III

Local Union Employment Bureaus

There is a great need in every industrial community for some agency through which the demand for and the supply of labor can be adjusted. On account of the seasonal fluctuations of trades, the variations in the demands of individual employers in consequence of peculiarities of their markets, and the continuous changes in the personnel of the working force of each business unit, there is at all times more or less maladjustment. The employment bureau is justified when there is unemployment due to the inability of employers to get into contact quickly with the unemployed who are capable of meeting their requirements.

In descriptions of the existing employment bureaus of the United States the activities of the trade unions have generally been omitted or given minor consideration. This is due either to the fact that the proportion of workmen who are organized is small, or that the majority of the trade-union employment bureaus are not merely employment bureaus. Furthermore, one cannot learn of the activities of the unions in this connection by a study of their literature. Many trade unionists when asked whether their union maintains an employment bureau will answer in the negative although their particular union may possibly have a very practical method of securing work for its members. The difficulty lies in the fact that there is prevalent the idea that an employment bureau is an office with card indexes and an attendant who is entirely occupied in registering the names of the unemployed and receiving applications for workmen from employers. The trade unionist thinks it only natural that his business agent should secure work for him when he is unemployed. This, he considers, is one of

the principal benefits of the union, but he does not term such an agency an employment bureau.

It is obvious that the need for an employment bureau varies in the different trades. In those trades where the period of employment is relatively long, as in the printing trade, the glass industry, and the various railroad trades, there is little need for local employment bureaus. The maintenance of a business agent in such trades would ordinarily be uneconomical. The business agent is peculiarly the product of the building trades unions. The need for such an official is great in these trades because of the short term of employment.

Inasmuch as the local union generally provides for bringing unemployed members into connection with the proffered employment, the national unions have given little consideration to the question of local-union employment bureaus. The only exceptions appear to be the Ladies Garment Workers,[1] the United Garment Workers,[2] the Lithographers,[3] and the Cigar Makers,[4] all of which require their local unions to "establish labor bureaus for the purpose of designating work to the unemployed." In the constitutions of the local unions there are seldom found any provisions for the maintenance of employment bureaus because this is considered to be one of the essential functions of the unions, which it is unnecessary to particularize.

It may be said that the average member of a union in search of employment secures help from his local through one or more of the following sources: (1) the business agent or secretary, (2) the shop collector, (3) fellow members.

In practically every organized trade there are some local unions which provide for the employment of an official who is paid a salary sufficient to permit a capable member to give his entire time to the duties of the office. Such officers are

[1] Constitution, 1914, art. 12, sec. 2.
[2] Constitution, 1912, art. 13, sec. 2.
[3] Constitution, 1913, art. 11, sec. 1.
[4] Constitution, 1912, sec. 131.

known as business agents or secretaries. The maintenance of such an office entails the expenditure of a considerable sum of money. The salaries of business agents vary from $20.00 to $50.00 per week, while the average is perhaps $30.00, and there are incidental expenses of $5.00 per week. A local union expends, on the average, about $1900 a year for a business agent. It is obvious that only those local unions which have a considerable membership can afford this expense.

In a few cases the expense of maintaining business agents is shared by the national unions. Thus, the Machinists assist local unions in maintaining business agents in any city "if after due investigation it is found that the interests of the organization warrant the expense."[5] The Pattern Makers in 1913 assisted several of its local unions to support paid representatives,[6] and the Blacksmiths for many years have subsidized all local union business agents by paying one-half of their expenses.[7] In the Molders the expense of maintaining the business agents of the twenty-two Conference Boards is partly met by a subsidy of five cents per capita per month and in some cases by an additional sum.[8] The Teamsters, Metal Polishers, Brass Workers, and several other unions help to defray the expenses of the local-union business agents when the unions are in need of assistance. Frequently, several local unions of allied trades no one of which would be able alone to support a business agent, together maintain a paid representative. This occurs generally among the building trades in small cities.

It is found that the majority of local unions which maintain business agents are either in the building trades, or if in other trades, those of large membership. In 1915, 320 local unions of the Carpenters and Joiners maintained business agents. The Chicago local unions had 29 agents, while New York had 16, Boston, 12, and Philadelphia and San

[5] Constitution, 1913, art. 10, sec. 1.
[6] Proceedings, 1913, p. 14.
[7] Interview with Secretary Kramer, August, 1915.
[8] Constitution, 1914, art. 20, sec. 6.

Francisco each had 7. In the Painters, there were 275 local unions which employed business agents, the Chicago branch maintaining 15. Of the 760 local unions of Machinists, 47 had business agents. Thirty-seven of the 345 local unions of Boilermakers, 69 of the 118 branches of the Bridge and Structural Iron Workers, 23 of the 35 local unions of Elevator Constructors, and 45 of the 90 local unions of the Pattern Makers also employed representatives in 1915. Of the other unions, the majority have business agents in the large cities and in the industrial centers of their particular trades.

The duties of the business agent are varied. Generally speaking, he acts as treasurer of the union; he visits the different jobs to see that all those working at his trade are "paid up" members; he settles disputes between the members and the employers, interprets the rules of the union, and acts as an employment agent. Thus, as one of the duties of the business agent of the New York local union of bookbinders, it is provided that "he (the business agent) shall keep a record containing the names of the unemployed reporting for work and he shall find where men are wanted and adopt the speediest methods of notifying said members of such vacancies."[9] The business agent of the Baltimore local union of bricklayers and masons is required "to use all honorable means to procure work for the unemployed and to visit all builders and contemplative builders and endeavor to secure their work for the members of the union."[10]

While the activities of business agents have probably received more criticism than those of any other union official, it is no doubt true that the agent is of great real benefit to the organized workmen. The average business agent is a well-informed man. He is on the alert at all times to secure employment for the members of the union. While his primary object is to make every job a union job, it is in

[9] Constitution, 1903, art. 5, sec. 6.
[10] Constitution, 1909, art. 10, sec. 7.

consequence of this desire that he is efficient in supplying employers with workmen. His primary occupation is to learn of developments in his trade. He knows the condition of every job within his jurisdiction, the prospects for the future employment of his members, and the immediate chances for securing work at each job.

Let us consider, for instance, the activities of a business agent in the building trades. In the morning before the members begin work he spends an hour at his office in order to take care of any employment which the employers may have to offer. Then he spends a part of the day in visiting the various buildings on which his members are employed. He consults the employers and the foremen as to their need for workers. He secures from the architects a list of prospective building operations and visits the contractors or owners. Thus he learns of practically every opportunity for the employment of members of the union.

The business agent does not, like the average employment-bureau official, wait for employment to be offered, but makes a survey of the field and applies direct to the prospective employer. Furthermore, he is far more efficient than the average employment-bureau agent in that he is a specialist. He knows his own trade perfectly; he knows the ability of each of his men and his characteristics; and he appreciates the peculiarities of the employers and the conditions surrounding the various jobs. He considers these conditions before he recommends one of his men to an employer. On the other hand, the ability of an official of an employment bureau to cater to any particular trade is limited. He is forced to deal with more than one trade and as his knowledge of each is limited his selection of men is more or less haphazard. No amount of questioning by the employment agent can produce a knowledge of those peculiarities of the individual workmen which the business agent, through long association, has discovered, and an acquaintance with which is so useful to him in selecting workmen for particular jobs.

The Chicago business agent of the Pattern Makers thus explains why employers apply to the union for men:

"The business agent knows his men and can furnish a more satisfactory man than the employer can hire at the door of his factory by taking men as they come. Our members in their application for membership to the union and every time they send in an application for work, must state in the application the class of work that they are used to and how long they have worked at that class; besides, we get confidential reports from other sources upon the special aptitude and ability of our members. The union officials claim that, being practical pattern makers themselves and having this line upon their men, they are more capable for selecting the men for a given kind of work than the employers themselves, who, while excellent business men, are not practical workmen. We give them the best men we can get for their line and we never send a man to a shop to do work that he can not do, if we know it."[11]

While the business agent spends the greater part of the day in visiting the various jobs and shops where his members are employed, he also has his office hours. These are known to the employers and to the members of the union. The latter generally loiter around the union headquarters in order to secure any employment which the business agent may have to offer. Some local unions have gone further and designated certain periods of the day during which applications will be received for the different classes of workmen. Thus the Chicago Bakers and Confectioners, in their 1914 agreement with the employers, secured a provision that all bakers must be secured through the union's employment bureau, which would be open all day. But "steady hands" must be asked for during the hours of ten to twelve, and "hands" on cakes between one and two o'clock, while substitutes were to be had at all times. Because of the fact that the employer can secure a competent hand on a few hours' notice, the union is frequently called upon to furnish workmen. The employer calls the business agent by telephone and asks for a certain kind of workman. Generally, the desired man can be found among those waiting about the hall, or one can soon be notified by means of the telephone number which each man on the unemployed list gives to the business agent, and the employer is furnished the

[11] Regulation and Restriction of Output, Eleventh Special Report of the Commissioner of Labor (Washington, 1904), p. 188.

desired workmen within a short time. This is practically impossible in the case of any other employment bureau. It has been stated by the Chicago employers of union pattern makers that they receive their men through the union as a matter of choice because "it is much easier to telephone to union headquarters for a man than to get one in any other way," and further that "the union does try to send a man best suited to the needs."[12]

It is obvious that the ability to secure a workman on an hour's notice is very convenient to employers. Consider for instance the case of bakers. When the shop starts to work it may be found that several "first hands" are absent on account of sickness or other cause, or that it is necessary to provide for extra orders. In such cases the employer requires the services of additional men within one or two hours, and the union's employment bureau is usually able to meet the requirement.

But the business agent goes further than merely receiving applications for men, and sometimes adopts ingenious methods of securing employment for his constituents. He scans the want advertisements of the press in hope that there may be found opening for his members. He secures publicity by advertising that employers may secure workmen from him on a few hours' notice by merely telephoning to his office. By means of such methods many odd jobs are filled. Thus, the business agent of the Memphis, Tennessee, Carpenters and Joiners' local union reported:

> We send out one thousand circulars each month for the purpose of refreshing the memory of our clients that we are still able to furnish them mechanics. It is one of the good features of this office that we secure a great number of small jobs from merchants. The merchants themselves are pleased with this arrangement as it saves them a great deal of trouble. The instances where our members secured employment through this office during the past year amounted to twelve hundred. Another point worth mentioning is the assistance rendered other trades by this office. Frequently we receive calls for painters, plasterers and men of other crafts, and as it helps us as well as others and serves to make this institution more useful and popular we are only too glad to oblige them in this respect.[13]

[12] Ibid., p. 189.
[13] The Carpenter, February, 1906, p. 4.

It is obvious that by requiring the employers to apply to the union for labor, the union makes its employment bureau more efficient. Such a course has been pursued more or less successfully by the Bakers, Barbers, Brewery Workers, Deutsch-Amerikanischen Typographia, Lithographers, Photo-Engravers, Flint Glass Workers, and Potters. Of course such a policy can only be enforced where the union has thorough control of the trade; but where this method is practiced the union employment bureaus are put on a more business-like basis.

As was stated above, the greater number of local unions are not financially able to maintain paid representatives. Such local unions, however, frequently appoint one of their members to perform the duties of a business agent during his spare time. He is generally the secretary or president. This official receives from the employers applications for workmen and confers with the employed members as to the prospects for work at the different shops. Frequently there is appointed in each shop or on each job where members of the union are employed a member who is designated the "shop collector," or in the building trades, the "steward." It is the duty of this member to represent the union and to acquaint himself with the prospects for employment. Should there be need for additional workers, it is his duty to make this known to the unemployed. At each meeting of the union, the various shop collectors or stewards make reports. The shop collectors and secretaries are of great assistance in securing employment for members. The employer knows that by applying to these men he will be supplied with the desired number of workmen more quickly and efficiently than by application to any other agency. Furthermore, these officials, like the paid representatives, are always on the alert to discover possible places of employment without waiting for applications from the employers.

Another source from which the union workman receives aid in securing employment is his fellow workers. One of the duties of a trade unionist is to procure work for his

unemployed fellow member. Thus, one of the duties of members of the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners is "to assist each other to secure employment."[14] A member of the Bridge and Structural Iron Workers[15] or Bricklayers and Masons[16] takes the following oath: "I will at all times by every honorable means within my power procure work for members of this union." At each meeting of a local union the president usually asks the following questions: "Are there any members out of employment?" and, "Does anyone know of any vacancies?" Generally, if there are any situations unfilled they are made known to the unemployed. Indeed, several local unions provide for the fining of those members who fail to notify the union of vacancies which are known to them.

The permanent headquarters of a local union offers a place where the unemployed can congregate and where those who are working can assemble after working hours. The importance of this feature of trade-union life must not be overlooked. It is here that all the members meet and talk over the conditions in the trade. Those who have knowledge of vacancies gladly, and one might say, proudly, convey such information to their fellow members. Prospects for the future are discussed and the trade gossip is canvassed. The usefulness of such meeting places has long been realized by the trade unions. As early as 1893, the Bricklayers and Masons advised the local unions to establish and maintain headquarters which would be open to the members at all hours of the day.[17] During the past ten years other unions have followed this example, and at present practically every building-trades union and the greater number of other unions maintain such rooms.

One has only to spend a short time in the headquarters of a building-trades union to find that the members are fully cognizant of the local employment situation. The average

[14] Constitution, 1914, sec. 3.
[15] Constitution, 1914, p. 42.
[16] Constitution, 1912, art. 12, sec. 4.
[17] Proceedings, 1893, p. 113.

union carpenter, for example, knows of practically every job under construction and of the more important ones for which contracts have been awarded. Not only does he know the name of the contractor and general foreman, but that of the foreman whose duty it is to engage carpenters. There is no doubt that this lessens the work of the business agent. The workman does not ordinarily wait for the employer to apply to the union, but visits the foreman beforehand and tries to obtain a job. In many cases this is done while the man is still engaged upon a job which will terminate before work on the new building will be started. While this method of obtaining employment is generally termed "calling around," it is very different from the haphazard means by which the unorganized and unskilled workmen secure employment.

There exists in all unions the custom of "calling around." Having failed to secure employment through the union agencies described above, there remains the possibility of applying direct to the various employers. In some unions this method is facilitated by a printed list of shops or factories in which union members are employed. Generally, the business agent or secretary will indicate certain establishments at which there is the greatest chance for employment. But on account of the increasing efficiency of the union employment bureaus this custom is gradually disappearing. The workmen now realize that when the business agent, secretary and other members are not cognizant of any vacancies, there is small chance of finding employment. Consequently, this method, which was at one time the chief means by which workmen secured employment, is rapidly being supplanted by union agencies. In some unions it is held to be discreditable for a member to ask the employer directly for work. Among the Hatters it is the accepted custom that a member looking for employment must not apply directly to the employer but get another member who is working in the shop to apply for him. Foremen who hire hatters in violation of this rule are liable to

a fine of $25.00.[18] This rule also obtains to some degree among the Cigar Makers.[19]

The methods by which workmen are chosen for the vacancies which are reported to the union are of sufficient importance to be mentioned. There are three usual methods of determining which member shall be given the proffered employment: (1) place on the out-of-work list, (2) the decision of an official, (3) the drawing of lots.

There are two kinds of out-of-work lists, the compulsory and the optional. The former is found in comparatively few unions. Under this method the names of the unemployed are kept on a list in the order of the length of unemployment, that is, those who have been out of work the greatest length of time are placed at the head of the list. When the employer applies to the union for a workman the first man on the list is sent, and unless the employer can show that this man is unable to perform the work he is obliged to employ him. This rule is found in general practice only among the Miners and Brewery Workers, but exists in a great many local unions of other trades. It is obvious that such a custom can only exist in a strongly organized trade, and where there is comparatively little difference in the skill of the workers.

The optional out-of-work list is in general use in a great many unions. Upon application the out-of-work list is furnished the employer and he is allowed to take any man on the list. Of course, if he should merely ask that a workman be sent him, the man longest unemployed would probably be designated. Such lists are maintained by a great number of local unions of the Metal Workers, Hatters, Pattern Makers, Photo-Engravers, Bakers, Printers, Lithographers, Blacksmiths, Machinists, Coast Seamen, and of some national building-trades unions. The rules governing the out-of-work list of the Coast Seamen are as follows: The man first on the list is given the first chance at the

[18] Interview with President Martin Lawlor, August, 1915.

[19] Letter from the secretary of the Tampa, Florida, branch to the writer, Feb. 22, 1913.

vacancy. If he should not care to accept the employment, his name remains on the list in the same order, but if he should be absent from the roll call three consecutive times his name is removed to the bottom of the list.[20]

The second method—the decision of an official—is more widely used. Generally when an employer applies to the union for workmen, he specifies certain requirements, or, as occurs in a great many cases, he asks for a particular man. If he asks for a certain man, this member if unemployed will be sent. If he does not, the business agent generally chooses the first man he can find who is able to meet the requirements. In the building trades if the men are wanted quickly, those loitering in the meeting room are chosen. In trades in which there is a high degree of specialization or if men with certain qualifications are wanted, the business agent generally takes into consideration all who are unemployed before designating the man to accept the employment. It is obvious that where time is not important this is by far the best method of choosing men. Indeed, as was said above, it is in this respect that the business agent excels the ordinary employment bureau officials.

It is to be admitted that by giving a union official the power of designating the person to fill a vacancy a fertile field for favoritism is opened, and disgruntled workmen have frequently asserted that the chances for securing employment depend more upon being a friend of the business agent than upon ability or the length of the period of unemployment. On the other hand, if the comparative periods of unemployment were the sole guide, much of the value of the business agent's service would be lost.

The third method of choice—the drawing of lots—is found in very few unions. Where practised a number of slips, on one of which is written the word "job," are placed in a hat, and the members draw the slips to determine which one is to apply for the job. This custom exists in a few of

[20] Letter from the editor of the Coast Seamen's Journal to the writer, October 25, 1915.

the local unions of the Cigar Makers and in some building-trades unions.

In certain building-trades unions no choice is made, but the information concerning employment is placed upon a bulletin board in the union headquarters. It is considered that by this means each unemployed member is given an equal chance to obtain employment. Under this method, it frequently results that many times the number of workmen desired apply for work.

If the trade-union member is unable through his union to find employment, there remains the possibility of securing work through application to state, commercial employers' and philanthropic employment bureaus, and through answering advertisements in the newspapers.

Since 1890, when the State of Ohio established the first state employment bureau, twenty-two other States have created such agencies, and more than twenty-five cities have formulated plans for aiding those out of work in securing employment. Of the twenty-three state bureaus more than one-half have been established since the financial depression of 1907. Although one of the reasons for their establishment was the desire to curb the evils of the private employment bureaus, a historical study shows that they have been created mainly in periods of industrial depression. These bureaus appear to a part of the public as one of the principal means of increasing employment in such depressions. States and municipalities are urged to establish employment bureaus and great efforts are put forth to insure their success. Soon after their establishment, and when business conditions improve, interest in the bureaus dies out and they either become merely registration offices for the down-and-outs and the unemployable, or are abandoned.

The actual results of the public employment bureaus have been well described by a recent investigator as follows: "In practice, far from supplanting private agencies, the free offices have not even maintained an effective competition against them. With few exceptions their operations have

been on a small scale, their methods unbusinesslike, and their statistics valueless, if not unreliable. Four States and about half a dozen cities have discontinued their offices and most of those now in operation are constantly on the defensive to maintain their existence."[21] Under such conditions it is not surprising that the trade unions have not given their support to the public bureaus.

President Gompers of the American Federation of Labor traces the "persistent and widespread promotion in this country of the scheme for state and philanthropic employment bureaus to the transatlantic steamship combination and the great trusts." He says further that the necessity for the public employment bureaus arises mainly when the stream of immigration is directed to one locality or another to the benefit of the employers, and that the employers' profit comes through replacing union workmen by non-unionists and through substituting foreign cheap labor for unorganized labor.[22] President Gompers appears to think that trade-union employment bureaus, advertising, and regulated private agencies are capable of supplying sufficiently the needs of the employers, and finds no reason for the establishment of public employment bureaus.[23] The convention of the American Federation of Labor in 1914 refused to endorse a resolution urging the creation of employment bureaus by States and cities.[24] President Furuseth of the Coast Seamen stated during the consideration of the resolution that the existing bureaus have been a "never ending curse" and have always been placed in charge of those "who have no sympathy with the struggling toilers."[25]

The attitude of the American Federation of Labor towards public employment offices is not unlike that of the English and German trade unions when public labor ex-

[21] W. M. Leiserson, "Public Employment Offices," in Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 29, 1914, p. 29.
[22] American Federationist, July, 1911, p. 514 et seq.
[23] Ibid., July, 1911, p. 528.
[24] Ibid., June, 1915, p. 31.
[25] Proceedings, 1914, p. 357.

changes were first established in those countries. Gradually the unions in those countries have come to realize that such bureaus are not inimical to their interest. Recently the unions have been granted some share in the management and have accordingly appeared less hostile, though they can hardly be considered even yet as sympathetic.

A few of the American trade unions have not objected to the establishment of public employment bureaus. The Printers at their convention in 1915 went on record as favoring them,[26] and the Maryland Federation of Labor has recently endorsed the movement.[27] Indeed, the Superintendent of the Illinois Free Employment Agency[28] said in 1901 that organized labor was largely responsible for the creation of that bureau, and Superintendent Dunderdale of the Boston Free Employment Office, states that "it was only through the influence of the trade unions that the law establishing the Free Employment Offices in this state was granted."[29] In some cases the unions have cooperated with the bureaus. Mr. Sears, superintendent of the Boston Employment Agency, said that the unions furnished the bureau with information regarding labor difficulties and that there had never been any trouble over the bureau's supplying the employers with strike breakers.[30]

While it appears that the public bureaus in general have been of little value to skilled workmen, there are several which have done very efficient work during the past few years. Indeed, it appears that the trade unionists, while criticising the utility of the bureaus, have made some use of them. Thus, the report of the New York City Public Employment Bureau for the first twenty-nine days of its operation shows that of the 10,489 persons who applied for employment, 364, of nearly three and one-half per cent, were members of trade unions,[31] while the Boston office of the

[26] Proceedings, 1915, p. 65.
[27] Proceedings, 1915, pp. 63, 67.
[28] The Bridgemen's Magazine, December, 1901, p. 182.
[29] Letter to the writer, February 25, 1916.
[30] American Labor Legislation Review, June, 1915, p. 284.
[31] Ibid., p. 281.

Massachusetts Employment Bureau reported that of the 10,707 persons for whom it secured positions in the first year of its operation, 441, or more than four per cent, were known to be members of trade unions.[32] Of course, the trade unionists use the public bureaus less, because the chances of a skilled worker obtaining employment in this way are very much less than those of an unskilled workman.

It has been estimated that there are between 4,000 and 5,000 commercial employment bureaus in the United States.[33] The majority of these have as clients mainly domestic servants and waiters, and to a less extent girls and women in the unorganized trades. Only a few of them profess to secure employment for skilled workmen, while trades which are highly organized are rarely supplied by these agencies except in times of strikes. The trade unions regard private employment agencies largely as strike breaking bureaus and the activities of these offices furnish considerable proof of the soundness of the unions' contention. Moreover, several of the unions have experienced considerable trouble with commercial bureaus even at times when no strikes were being carried on. Thus, the Hotel and Restaurant Employees complain bitterly that its members who apply to such agencies in periods of industrial depression are not infrequently made to pay exorbitant fees for the promise of situations which do not exist.[34]

The majority of trade unionists, especially those in the building trades, cannot hope to secure employment through the commercial bureaus because the few jobs which such bureaus have to fill are mainly non-union; and the general trade-union antipathy towards these agencies is such that they would be used only as a lost resort. An exception seems to be the attitude of the Steam Shovel and Dredge Men. In its monthly journal there generally appear the advertisements of some twenty railroad labor supply agen-

[32] Quarterly Publications, American Statistical Association, June, 1909, p. 522.

[33] Final Report of the Commission on Industrial Relations, 1915, pp. 171, 172.

[34] Mixer and Server, September, 1915, p. 68.

cies in the West and Northwest. The secretary, however, explains that these agencies do not charge the members of the union fees, but merely act as the union's representatives and obtain their fees from the employers.[35]

Within recent years the employers' associations in all the large industrial centers have established employment bureaus. These are supported by the employers and workmen are not charged fees. Although the directors of these bureaus claim that they have been established in order to supply the employers with workmen at all times, the majority of them owe their origin to the desire of the employers to establish and maintain the so-called "open shop." These bureaus are in most cases not active except in times of industrial strife and the motive for their maintenance is mainly to secure a weapon against the unions. Consequently, except in a small number of cases, the trade unionist cannot hope to secure any help from them.

In every city there are religious and charitable organizations which attempt to find work for the unemployed. The tendency during each period of industrial depression has been to multiply these agencies. Inasmuch as the main work of these philanthropic bureaus is to secure work for the unemployed who are not capable of holding ordinary positions the trade unionist is not likely to receive help from this source. Frequently the unions have protested against the wages at which such agencies have placed their applicants. In one case during the depression of 1914 a philanthropic bureau in a Mid-western city was accused by the trade unions of undermining the whole scale of wages in the city by sending men to work at cut rates.[36]

There remains for the workmen the want advertisements of the newspapers. To unskilled workmen, professional workers, and domestic servants these are of some value, but the skilled mechanic and trade unionist can rarely use them to any advantage. A study of newspaper advertisements as a medium for securing employment shows that the trade

[35] Interview with Secretary Dolan, August, 1915.
[36] American Labor Legislation Review, November, 1915, p. 545.

unionist is seldom offered work at union wages and hours. Advertisements for carpenters, painters and other building-trades mechanics are frequently inserted, but the men are generally to be employed on non-union jobs. A study of the "help-wanted" columns of the Baltimore newspapers for several years resulted in finding less than a half-dozen opportunities for members of any trade union to secure work under union conditions.

In what has been said above the attempt has been made to show the superiority of the trade-union over other existing employment bureaus as a means of connecting the unemployed with employers in need of men. Not all of the unions have developed their resources to the full in this connection and accordingly the members of many unions are forced to rely upon other means of securing employment.

CHAPTER IV

Union Agencies for the Distribution of Workmen

In the same way that a workman is forced to move in a community from one employer to another, he may be forced to move from one local labor market to another because of the variation in the demands for workmen in the two local labor markets. Although a number of trades are affected in approximately equal degree throughout the country in periods of general business depression, there are other trades which are differently affected in different communities. Even in periods of industrial prosperity, the variations in demand among local labor markets are great enough to necessitate the transfer of many workmen. Given the fact that there is a scarcity of workmen in one labor market and a body of unemployed in another, there remains the problem of making known to the unemployed that there are opportunities for securing work elsewhere.

Some unions have considered it their duty not only to secure the employment which is offered in a community for the members who reside in that labor market, but when the demand for labor in a community is such as to require the services of additional workmen, to procure them from other places where some of their members are unemployed. Inasmuch as the methods of those unions which have attempted systematically to increase the mobility of labor cannot be successfully classified, it is necessary to describe separately the activities of the several unions.

Owing probably to the great local differences in the demand for workmen in the granite industry, the Granite Cutters' Union has probably the most effective method of adjusting inter-local supply to be found among American trade unions. During the past fifteen years the following

system has been maintained: When a local union is unable to supply from its members the number of workmen desired by the employers, the national union is notified. The general secretary immediately sends this information to the local unions nearest the locality. If it is found that the man cannot be obtained from nearby local unions, the information is printed in a "flier," with generally eight or ten other such announcements, and sent to every local union in the country. The information concerning each opportunity for employment is complete. The "flier" gives the employer, the kind of workmen required, that is, granite cutter, polisher or tool sharpener, the class of work to be performed, the number of men required, the working conditions and the length of time the men will be given employment. These "fliers" are generally issued weekly, but the period depends upon the variations in the demand among the different localities.

Unless the distances between the local unions in which men are unemployed and those in which men are needed are very great, there are few cases in which the employers are not supplied in a short time. The general secretary, besides notifying the trade of the opportunities for employment, also occupies himself in furthering the transference of the men required. Members are advised to telegraph or write to the employers before moving, and as this advice is generally followed, only the required number of men transfer. The employers have expressed their satisfaction with the system, and the union has succeeded in materially shortening the period of unemployment due to the need of transference from one locality to another, and has done away with a great deal of needless and haphazard traveling from one city to another.

The system of inter-local supply among the Glass Bottle Blowers had its origin in the introduction of the bottle machine. To operate the machine the services of expert pressers were required. The union did not have control over the class of workmen who were able to perform this

kind of work and therefore established an employment bureau in order to satisfy the demands of the employers. In 1903 a member who was an expert presser was appointed as chief of this bureau. The bureau seems to have given satisfaction, for President Hayes reported to the convention in 1905 that the employers had been furnished with 111 machine workers, which amply filled every demand for men of this class.[1]

Having been so successful with the employment bureau for machine workers, the union decided to render similar services to other members. Accordingly, all unemployed members were requested to send their names, addresses and occupation to the national secretary. The local union secretaries and manufacturers who were in need of men were asked to notify the union. This extension of the bureau's services has been a distinct success, despite the fact that at times it has been impossible to induce the unemployed to transfer to places where work could be secured. The general secretary, upon receiving a request for men, sends telegrams or letters to those upon his unemployed list, and if this fails to procure the required number of men, the trade is notified by means of circulars. Also, each local-union secretary reports quarterly to the union the number of furnaces at work and idle, the number of members employed and unemployed, the number doing "spare" work, the number of men required and the number of men available for transfer. This information is classified and sent to the trade. Thus, there is available at all times, definite information as to the condition of trade in the various localities for the benefit of those members who are unemployed and are willing to remove to another locality. There appears to be little, if any, difficulty in inducing the local unions to notify the union of a scarcity of workmen, and the traveling members are generally given the same consideration as the local members when there is work to be had.

Another national union which has established an employ-

[1] Proceedings, 1905, p. 23.

ment bureau is the Flint Glass Workers. The demand for men in various localities varies so greatly in this trade that sometimes it has been very difficult to supply the employers with the required number. In the agreements between the union and the manufacturers the latter have demanded the incorporation of the following: "The union agrees to advertise for men free of cost, and to do its best to place men in the factory when needed."[2] The mode of procedure is for the local-union secretaries to furnish the general secretary with definite information as to the number of men required and the number of members unemployed. Those who are unemployed and willing to transfer to another locality file their applications with the union. The employers notify the chairman of the shop committees when they are in need of men and they in turn inform the general secretary, if the local union is unable to furnish the desired number. The general secretary immediately notifies those on the unemployed list who live nearest the locality in which the shortage of men exists. If this fails to supply the number of men required, the entire membership is notified through the official journal and circulars.

During the past few years the union has experienced considerable difficulty in supplying employers with all the men needed in certain branches of the trade. Especially was this the case with mould makers. The union through its trade letters, journals, and circulars, and through correspondence with the local unions in 1910, and again in 1912, attempted to reach the unemployed and induce them to transfer to localities in which there were shortages of mould makers. The places remained unfilled despite the activities of the union. It was clearly a case of unprecedented prosperity in this department of the industry, and the union's methods were not at fault. In the other branches of the trade, the union has generally been able to effect the needed transfers.

The custom of writing to firms in different localities for work became so general and produced such unfavorable re-

[2] Circular, Number 1, August 7, 1914, p. 2.

sults that the Lithographers in 1906 ruled that this method of applying for employment should be discontinued.[3] As a substitute there was established an employment bureau under the direction of the general secretary. The unemployed were to send their names and qualifications to the bureau, and the local-union secretaries were required to notify the general secretary of any vacancies. Those first on the unemployed list and living nearest were to be notified by telegraph to apply for the positions or to notify the bureau that they did not care to accept them. Although there appears to be only a small number of transfers among the lithographers, the employment bureau performs its duties in this connection very adequately.

The Photo-Engravers' Union for many years was confronted with the problem which exists in so many trades, viz., the acceptance by members of positions in other cities without consulting the business agent of the union in the locality. There might be a sufficient number of men who were capable of filling the positions in the city, but the employer, for reasons of his own, preferred to obtain workmen from another city. There was thus an unnecessary and costly movement. The convention in 1906 established an employment bureau at national headquarters and adopted certain rules. It was made compulsory for members to write to local-union secretaries before accepting positions in another city. The unemployed were to register at headquarters. Local unions were required to notify the bureau of any vacancies and the employers were requested to file applications for workmen.[4] During the first six months of the operation of the bureau 108 applications for employment and 109 applications for workmen were received. The secretary reported that the greater number of these positions had been filled, although it was impossible to give the exact number as the members did not always notify the bureau when the positions were accepted. It was then provided that when an applicant was notified of a vacancy, a blank

[3] Proceedings, 1906, p. 193.
[4] Proceedings, 1906, p. 61.

was to be sent him to be used for notifying the bureau whether or not he had accepted the position.[5]

From time to time improvements were made in the methods of the bureau and its usefulness was increased. In 1912 President Woll reported that the bureau "continued to be of great benefit to the members seeking employment," and likewise that "employers have been aided, and general satisfaction has been expressed by all those who have had occasion for its use."[6] During the past few years the efficiency of the bureau has been increasingly higher. Writing to employers for positions, advertising or answering advertisements for employment, and applying to other agencies than the union's bureau have been discouraged. The employers have thus practically been forced to make use of the bureau; and they have expressed complete satisfaction with the manner in which they have been brought into connection with possible employees. The chief reason for the present efficiency of the Photo-Engravers' employment bureau has been this realization by the officers of the benefits that the union may derive from it. As President Woll said in 1915, "We should ever be ready to do all in our power to furnish union help whenever required, not simply because the employer wants it, but because it is a good business proposition."[7]

The Potters also keep a list of unemployed members at headquarters. The general secretary requires those who apply for employment to state their experience, the particular kind of work they have performed, and other pertinent facts. When an employer inquires for a workman, the secretary is able to give him a list of those who are able to do the work. The general secretary states that the employers do not hesitate to apply to the bureau for men, and that the system has been very satisfactory to the members and the employers alike.[8]

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[5] Proceedings, 1907, p. 46.
[6] Proceedings, 1912, p. 24.
[7] Proceedings, 1915, pp. 23, 24.
[8] Letter of Secretary John T. Wood to the writer, October 25, 1915.

Through weekly reports made by the local unions of the Pattern Makers, the president is enabled to secure definite information of the state of the trade in each locality. The local secretaries report weekly the number of members employed and unemployed and the number of wood, metal, and plaster pattern makers wanted by the employers. These reports are classified and sent to each local union, thus enabling them each week to direct the unemployed to localities in which they can secure work. The president also attempts to supply directly the needs of employers from the list of unemployed members which is kept at headquarters, and telegraphs to those of the unemployed residing nearest the place where men are needed. These efforts coupled with the activities of the local unions adequately cover the field and in the majority of cases the employers are quickly and efficiently furnished with the necessary men.[9] The Stone Cutters for many years had a system like that of the Pattern Makers. The local unions reported to the general secretary the state of trade and prospects and the number of members employed and unemployed. These were classified and sent to the various local unions. Since September, 1914, these weekly trade reports have not been published, because the employment in all localities has been very poor and there has been no need for transfers.[10]

Three of the railroad brotherhoods have attempted to facilitate the movement of their members by the establishment of employment bureaus. At the first convention of the Locomotive Firemen in 1888 an employment bureau was established at headquarters. It was provided that the national president should keep a register of the applicants and endeavor to secure employment for them. The officers and members of the subordinate unions were urged to inform the bureau of all vacancies and the railroad companies were requested to apply to the bureau for men.[11] It is understood

[9] Interview with President James Wilson, August, 1915.
[10] Interview with Secretary Drayer, August, 1915.
[11] Locomotive Firemen's Magazine, November, 1888, p. 809.

that the bureau was established in order to secure employment for the one thousand members who were thrown out of work through losing the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy strike in 1888. Since that time it has performed but little service in securing employment for the members of the union. President Carter says that it has been unsuccessful for the reason that a railroad generally refuses to employ engineers and firemen who have secured their experience on other roads.[12]

The Railway Conductors[13] established its employment bureau in the same year as did the Firemen, but it was abolished after a few years on account of its failure to be of service to the unemployed. However, it was reëstablished at the Detroit Convention in 1913.[14] Acting President Sheppard said in 1915 that while there had been quite a number of applicants, the bureau had "been able to lend practically no assistance to the members searching for employment," although immediately following its establishment in 1913 employment was found "for several members."[15] The Railroad Trainmen in 1915 appointed one of its members as chief of its employment bureau in Chicago "for the purpose of advising its members who are now in search of employment."[16]

Prior to 1912 a member of the Bookbinders who wished to travel in search of employment was compelled to write to the secretaries of the local unions he wished to visit before he was allowed to apply directly to the employers for work. Because of the failure of the secretaries to reply and the spirit of selfishness displayed in many localities, this rule was abolished and an employment bureau was established. It was provided that the unemployed were to register with the bureau, and local union secretaries were required to notify the general secretary of all vacancies. Members who left positions were to report this fact to the

[12] Letter to the writer, October 19, 1915.
[13] Proceedings, 1888, p. 237.
[14] Proceedings, 1913, p. 748.
[15] Letter to the writer, October 16, 1915.
[16] Railroad Trainmen, March, 1915, p. 40.

bureau and the employers were requested to apply for men when they were needed.[17] During the first month of the bureau's existence, July, 1911, a number of members were furnished with employment,[18] but the local unions did not notify the general secretary of the vacancies in their jurisdictions and the bureau was abolished.[19]

For several years prior to 1912 President Lynch of the Typographical Union advocated the establishment of an employment bureau under the supervision of the general secretary. The convention in 1912 instructed the executive officers to formulate plans for such a bureau,[20] and the following rules were adopted: (1) only members of the union were to be registered; (2) each applicant was to pay an initiation fee of $1.00; (3) requests for men from cities in which there were local unions were to be endorsed by the local-union secretaries.[21] The bureau was opened January 1, 1913, and several hundred dollars were expended in sending to the trade advertising pamphlets. During the first six months of its operation, 62 members registered; during the next year there were 79 applicants for employment, while for the year 1914–1915 only 29 members registered, and of these it is thought that but few received employment which could be traced to the activities of the bureau. In short, as Secretary Hays said in 1915, the "employment bureau has not proven very satisfactory."[22]

In 1901 the Leather Workers on Horse Goods established an employment bureau at headquarters with three branches. The country was divided into three sections, in each of which a member was appointed as employment agent. Each was to receive applications from the unemployed and attempt to transfer them to localities in which they could secure employment. When one of the agents was unable

[17] International Bookbinder, June, 1911, p. 238; Ibid., August, 1911, p. 303.
[18] Ibid., August, 1911, p. 282.
[19] Letter from Secretary W. N. Reddick to the writer, November 9, 1915.
[20] Proceedings, 1912, p. 302.
[21] Typographical Journal, August, 1913, p. 86.
[22] Letter to the writer, October 19, 1915.

to supply the demands in his territory, he was to notify the general secretary or one of the other agents.[23] President Balsinger in 1902 said, "The bureau has given universal satisfaction,"[24] but the three sub-bureaus were abolished in 1903.[25] Since that time the bureau at headquarters has been maintained and has kept a list of the unemployed from which the requests of employers have been supplied. Secretary Pfeiffer in 1915 said, "We have met with little or no success for the reason that it has been impossible to get the employers to coöperate with the bureau."[26]

So far we have mentioned only the more important unions which have established employment bureaus. Although those which we have discussed are the only national unions which really perform any considerable service in placing the unemployed, there are a number of others that from time to time, under pressure from the employers, attempt to transfer the unemployed. In this category may be placed the following unions: Bakers, Blacksmiths, Bridge and Structural Iron Workers, Elevator Constructors, Stove Mounters, and Typographia. In none of these is there any permanent system of finding employment, the unions merely attempting to transfer members when some employer or local union writes for workmen.

Several unions have emphatically rejected the proposal to establish employment bureaus to which the local unions would have been required to report regularly the exact condition of trade. Thus, in 1895, the Iron, Steel and Tin Workers refused to accede to the suggestion of President Garland that an employment bureau should be established, to which the local unions should report every two weeks as to the condition of trade.[27] The general antipathy exhibited by the average member of a union towards any publicity of employment conditions is probably best illustrated by the history of the Bricklayers and Masons. In 1873 a

[23] Leather Workers' Journal, November, 1901, p. 60.
[24] Ibid., July, 1902, p. 306.
[25] Ibid., March, 1903, p. 32.
[26] Letter to the writer, October 19, 1915.
[27] Proceedings, 1895, p. 4940.

national employment bureau was established. Each local union secretary was required to inform the general secretary monthly as to the number of employed and unemployed, and whether or not any additional men were needed.[28] The bureau lasted but a few months, the local unions refusing to notify the secretary of the actual conditions of trade. In 1881 the union attempted to reëstablish the employment bureau and at this time required only quarterly reports from the local unions.[29] In the following year many of the local unions refusing to report, the rules were changed so as to require only semi-annual reports.[30] During 1905 Secretary Dobson was requested by employers in many cities to supply them with additional men. He thereupon wrote to all local unions asking them to report the actual condition of trade, giving the number of additional men required or the number of members unemployed. Only a few responses were made and the majority of these were from cities in which employment was very poor. In commenting upon the refusal of the local unions to give publicity to trade conditions, he said: "Judging from the replies we received we understood that no matter how many men were needed to supply the demands of the employers our local unions did not take kindly to our idea or desire the fact to be known that their particular communities were in need of men."[31] There was an attempt made at the convention in 1910 again to establish an employment bureau at headquarters, but only one third of the delegates voted in favor of the proposal.[32] During 1912 Secretary Dobson once more tried to obtain from the local unions accurate information concerning the state of trade, but he was forced to abandon the idea because the local unions refused to supply him with the necessary information.[33]

[28] Proceedings, 1873, p. 25.
[29] Proceedings, 1881, p. 25.
[30] Proceedings, 1882, p. 32.
[31] Fortieth Annual Report of the President and Secretary, 1905, p. 334.
[32] Proceedings, 1910, p. 169.
[33] Interview, August, 1915.

About ninety per cent of the American trade unions publish weekly or monthly journals which in a number of unions are set free to each member. Some of the unions, realizing the possibilities of these journals as a means of conveying information respecting employment conditions have utilized them for this purpose. For example, the Cigar Makers, Iron Molders, Plasterers, and Sheet Metal Workers publish every month in their journals the state of trade in each of their local unions. The Woodcarvers' Journal contains reports from the local unions giving the number of shops in which trade is good, fair and dull, and the number of members employed and unemployed. The Bricklayers and Masons, Carpenters, Flint Glass Workers, and Plumbers publish lists of cities in which trade is dull.

Some of the building-trades unions have for many years given considerable space in their journals to construction news in various cities. Lists of the principal contracts which have been awarded and advanced information relative to proposed buildings are published. The Bridge and Structural Iron Workers' journal contains a list of all iron and steel buildings and bridges that are contemplated, and the Bricklayers and Masons and the Lathers publish news concerning all construction work that will give employment to their members. While this information is sometimes valuable to those who wish employment, these lists have in many cases caused needless traveling. A bricklayer noticing in the journal that several large contracts have been awarded in a distant city may not know whether the construction is to be of brick, or whether the general condition of trade in the particular city is such that additional men will be required. There have been many complaints in the Bricklayers' Union concerning the publication of news of this kind, and at times the journal has discontinued publishing it. The Stone Cutters' Journal for several years contained a list of contracts awarded, but discontinued its publication in May, 1915. Secretary Drayer said that much needless traveling had been caused by the publication of

these lists since members had transferred to cities in which the journal had noted great building activity, only to find that on some of the large buildings not more than a few hundred dollars worth of stone was to be used, and in some cases that terra cotta had been substituted entirely for stone.[34]

The Boot and Shoe Workers, Coopers, Garment Workers, Granite Cutters, and Leather Workers on Horse Goods publish the names and addresses of employers who conduct strictly union establishments, and do not prohibit their members from writing to employers for employment.

In all trade-union journals there is a great amount of correspondence from the local-union secretaries and business agents. In those unions which have a relatively small number of local unions there is opportunity for all localities to be represented, but in some of the larger building-trades unions, for example, the Carpenters, Painters, and Bricklayers and Masons, this is not feasible. These reports from the local unions generally contain information as to the state of trade, the number of members employed and unemployed and the prospects for employment. In some cases this correspondence is very valuable to the members who wish to secure employment. Among the journals which serve the purpose very well, those of the following unions may be cited: Photo-Engravers, Bookbinders, Printers, Flint Glass Workers, Granite Cutters, and Bridge and Structural Iron Workers. For the information of those members who may desire to write to the business agent or secretary of a local union as to the chances for employment in other localities, 32 of the 80 trade-union journals print lists of local-union secretaries and business agents with their addresses.

Several of the subdivisions of the national unions, such as state conferences and districts councils, have attempted to devise means by which information concerning the state of trade could be conveyed to the unemployed. Among the building-trades unions, conferences are formed in the vari-

[34] Stone Cutters' Journal, May, 1915, p. 1.

ous States, composed of the local unions. The Bricklayers and Masons have 25 such conferences, while the Painters have 17 and the Carpenters 10. The Texas State Council of Carpenters sends to each of its members a monthly report of the number employed and unemployed, the prospects for employment, and the number of men wanted in each local union.[35] The Massachusetts State Conference of Bricklayers and Masons also publishes monthly reports of the condition of trade in each local union.[36]

Some of the districts of the unions have gone further than simply publishing the condition of trade, and have established employment bureaus. Thus, the New England Typographical Union and the Indiana Typographical Conference have conducted employment bureaus for several years, and President Lynch of the Printers says they have produced results "to the satisfaction of affiliated unions and their members."[37] The district vice-presidents of the Lithographers receive applications for employment and requests from the employers for workmen. Vice-President Lawrence reported that in 1906 he had succeeded in supplying the employers in his district with workmen from the five hundred applications which he had received during the year from unemployed members.[38] Frequently several local unions of a trade will conduct an employment bureau in common. Thus in 1915 the railroad divisions of the Sheet Metal Workers established an employment bureau in St. Louis, Missouri.[39] This practise exists to a certain extent among the pattern makers and in some other unions. It may be said that while these subdivisions of the unions do not generally coöperate very readily with one another in employment matters, they serve in some degree by their connections to direct the unemployed to localities in which work can be secured.

[35] The Carpenter, September, 1906, p. 40.
[36] Bricklayer and Mason, May, 1908, p. 70.
[37] Proceedings, 1912, p. 21.
[38] Proceedings, 1906, p. 193.
[39] Sheet Metal Workers' Journal, October, 1915, p. 399.

In those unions which do not maintain employment bureaus at the national headquarters, additional workmen are generally secured by one local union's writing or telegraphing to other local unions. This method is largely employed by the building-trades unions. When New York City is in need of additional building-trades mechanics, either Philadelphia, Baltimore, Boston, Albany, or Pittsburg is notified of the shortage of men. Sometimes, as is the case with the Elevator Constructors and Bridge and Structural Iron Workers, the business agent telegraphs to the local union of a nearby city to send a certain number of men, with the understanding that these men will be guaranteed employment if they come. The following letter, which was printed in the Bridge and Structural Iron Workers' Journal, was written by the business agent of Salt Lake City, and illustrates the methods in force. "I received a telegram from business agent Hendricks of Los Angeles asking me if I could furnish eight men for the San Pedro at Calientes, Nevada. I replied that I could send as many men as was needed. I received another telegram to send eleven men, so I sent them out on the 24th on the bases of $4.50 for nine hours and transportation expenses."[40]

But the greater part of the movement of trade unionists in search of employment does not result either from the activities of the union employment bureaus or through the notification of one local union by another that men are needed. The ordinary member realizes that local unions do not generally send for additional men until the pressure from employers forces them to do so. He knows that there are numerous instances in which other local unions are not notified of opportunities for employment even after the employers register their wants. Therefore, workmen keep in communication with one another and when the prospects are good, those who are cognizant of the fact notify their friends. Many workmen also write to the various business agents and local union secretaries to inquire about the pros-

[40] The Bridgemen's Magazine, July, 1911, p. 448.

pects for employment. This is the manner in which the unemployed, who are not habitual "travelers," generally secure their information. At times the local union secretaries complain that they are compelled to answer too many letters. The Washington business agent of the Bridge and Structural Iron Workers reported in 1904 that he received an average of four letters each day from members asking for information concerning the prospects for employment.[41] Other workmen write to their friends in other cities inquiring as to the conditions of trade.

We have outlined, so far as ascertainable, the methods of those unions which have attempted to devise means for giving information to the unemployed which will enable them to find employment in other places. There are in the United States over 125 national unions. Of these, we have found that only 14 maintain employment bureaus. And of these 14 bureaus, only seven can be said to possess merit. The value of the others to the unemployed is negligible. Numerous reasons have been advanced by trade unionists for the lack of success of the employment bureaus which have been established, and for the fact that the other unions do not even attempt to provide means for the dissemination of a knowledge of trade conditions. The failure of American unions to solve the problem of transferring their members from localities in which trade is poor to those in which work can be secured is chiefly attributable to the selfishness of the local unions There are very few trades in which traveling members do not receive a cool welcome from the local unions in which they deposit their cards. The members of a local union look upon the work to be done in their community as belonging to them, and they resent any intrusion upon the part of non-residents. Although this attitude is contrary to the doctrines of unionism, the greater number of union officials concede its existence. It is this spirit which has made it impossible to induce the local unions of the Bricklayers and Masons, the Cigar Makers and vari-

[41] Ibid., August, 1904, p. 28.

ous other unions, to report to other localities when men were needed.

Even when additional men are in great demand the local union will not attempt to obtain members from other localities. The secretary of the Bricklayers and Masons in 1901 said: "The local unions would rather allow non-union men to be employed at periods of prosperity than secure outside union men, for fear that the latter would stay in town after the busy season was over, and thus there would be less work per capita for the members."[42] Many devices besides the use of non-union workmen are practised in order to minimize the demand for workmen from other cities. Overtime is frequently worked and it has been said that the men will perform work which would ordinarily require the services of more men. The editor of the Bookbinders' Journal, in remarking upon the selfishness of the local unions, said: "I am confident that the spirit of home-guardism has been and still is detrimental to our interests, and best shows a clannish spirit which often keeps an extra man out of a shop while a crew of five men will go on and do the work of a crew formerly consisting of six men."[43]

The local unions have not been content with denying to non-residents the knowledge of trade conditions, but have also enforced rules which are designed to make it more difficult for the traveling members to gain admission to the local union. Many of the local unions of the Bricklayers demand the sum of $5.00 before traveling cards are accepted.[44]

Some local unions have gone even further, according to the secretary of the Electrical Workers, who says that in 1915 complaints were received that the local unions in some localities had refused to accept traveling cards on any condition.[45] Secretary Skemp of the Painters reported to the convention of 1915 that there was a "growing disposition to

[42] The Bricklayer and Mason, September, 1901, p. 1.
[43] International Bookbinder, June, 1911, p. 238.
[44] The Thirty-fifth Annual Report of the President and Secretary, 1900, p. 128.
[45] Electrical Worker, August, 1914, p. 370.

deny traveling members the right to deposit clearance cards," and that "all kinds of schemes are devised and excuses invented to keep the stranger without the gate and reserve the work for the resident member.[46]

Even after the traveling member has gained admission, he is not infrequently discriminated against. The local unions, in many cases, manage so that resident members shall be given preference over traveling members when employment is offered. It is a well known fact that in the building-trades unions of New York, Chicago and several other cities the non-resident member has small chance of securing work until the business agent has placed the resident members. A national rule of the Cutters in the Flint Glass Workers gives preference to local workmen,[47] and there have been cases in the Marble Workers[48] and in other unions where traveling members who had deposited their cards and had received employment were forced by the business agent to transfer to another city in order to "make room for resident members who were unemployed."

The exclusiveness of the local union is not always due to the desire to retain all work for the resident members. Frequently a local union desires to make demands upon the employers for an increase of wages or for better working conditions, and a time when the locality is in need of additional men offers a favorable occasion for the local union to enforce its demands. At such a time the local union does not want the information that employment conditions are good to reach other localities, and consequently it will try to keep the traveler from the city.

If the trade unionist has secured, through the aid of the agencies described above, or otherwise, information as to where he will be able to secure employment, there remains the problem of getting to the place where employment may

[46] Report of General Officers to the Eleventh Convention, 1913, p. 71.
[47] Rules of the Cutters, No. 22, in Proceedings of the Flint Glass Workers, 1911, p. 143.
[48] Proceedings, 1913, p. 163.

be had. The knowledge that a position can be secured in another city is of no value to a workman unless he is able to make the transfer. Inasmuch as the distances to be traversed in some cases require the expenditure of a considerable sum of money, the workman sometimes finds himself unable to go.

In some trades the employers advance traveling expenses, but this is not usual. Only in periods of great prosperity are such instances general. Thus in 1901, during a scarcity of granite cutters in the East, a firm in Hall Quarry, Maine, furnished transportation expenses to twenty men from Raymond, California.[49] But in a normal season employers of granite cutters do not advance expenses to their workmen. In some unions, such as the Elevator Constructors and Bridge and Structural Iron Workers whose members are taken by the employers from one city to another, the expenses are paid by the employers. As a general rule, however, the workmen are forced to rely upon their union or their own resources for traveling expenses even when they are engaged by an employer in another locality.

Only in a small percentage of cases are workmen assured of employment before the actual transfer is made. They may have been led to expect work at such and such a place, but it is usually only after their arrival that they obtain employment. In these cases the workman can not look to the employer for transportation expenses. If he is unable to pay the expense, his recourse must in most cases be to his union.[50] Many of the unions have considered it their duty to furnish members who desire to travel with the necessary transportation expenses, either as a loan or a gift.

The following table shows the amounts which have been expended for this benefit since 1903 by those unions which report to the American Federation of Labor.

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[49] Granite Cutters' Journal, August, 1901, p. 5.

[50] Some of the railroad systems have agreed to give transportation to members of the Brotherhoods who are unemployed and are traveling in search of work, provided they have been engaged by a common carrier within the previous ninety days. This is done under a provision made by the Interstate Commerce Commission (Locomotive Engineers' Journal, January, 1915, p. 44).

AMOUNTS PAID AS TRAVELING LOANS AND BENEFITS

Year	Amount	Year	Amount
1903	$84,891.58	1910	$42,999.55
1904	73,441.90	1911	58,784.71
1905	62,989.71	1912	40,571.02
1906	57,340.93	1913	33,693.10
1907	53,598.86	1914	54,404.90
1908	51,093.86	1915	70,346.70
1909	51,967.87	Total.....	$746,122.69

The systems of traveling loans and benefits in American trade unions have been, generally speaking, failures. At one time or another the following unions have paid traveling loans or benefits: Cigar Makers, Flint Glass Workers, Granite Cutters, Leather Workers on Horse Goods, Lithographers, Machinists, Typographia, and White Rats Actors. Only the Cigar Makers and Lithographers have maintained their systems to the present.

During the earliest years of the Cigar Makers' Union members who desired to travel in search of employment were granted loans by the local unions. As no great efforts were made by the local unions to which the members transferred to collect these loans, the system of loans from local unions was superseded in 1867 by a system established and maintained by the national union.[51] Under this plan an unemployed member was entitled to a loan sufficient to take him to the nearest union. The loan was to be repaid to the local union in which the member secured employment in weekly installments to the amount of twenty per cent of the member's earnings.[52] The carelessness of the secretaries in collecting these loans made the system an absolute failure and it was abolished in 1878.[53]

The local union of Warren, Pennsylvania, then proposed that the National Union maintain a "traveling fund" for the purpose of aiding traveling members. This aid was to be a gift and not a loan, but the measure failed of adoption.

[51] Proceedings, 1867, p. 155.
[52] Constitution, 1867, art. 11.
[53] Cigar Makers' Journal, October 5, 1878, p. 3.

However, in the following year Secretary Samuel Gompers of the New York local union proposed a new plan which was adopted by referendum vote.[54] It provided that any member in good standing for six months who was unemployed and desired to travel was entitled to a loan sufficient for tranportation expenses by the cheapest route to the nearest local union, and so on to the next union, until the loans reached the sum of $20.00.[55] The amount of any one loan was limited to $12.00 in 1884,[56] and in 1896 it was further reduced to $8.00.[57] The system in operation at present provides that members who desire to obtain traveling loans must have been in good standing for one year. After obtaining employment the borrower must pay to the collector of the shop in which he is employed ten per cent of his weekly earnings until the loan is repaid.[58]

The Granite Cutters established a traveling loan system in 1880, three years after the organization of the national union. It provided that any member in good standing for at least six months who was not able to obtain employment and wished to transfer to another local union was entitled to a loan of not more than $10.00. It was necessary for the borrower to secure two members in good standing to become security for him, and the loan was to be repaid in installments of ten per cent of the weekly earnings.[59] In 1888 the latter provision was changed so that the member was required to pay the loan in installments of twenty-five per cent of his weekly earnings.[60] From the outset the system was a failure on account of the difficulty in securing payment of loans. It was thought that the provision that those acting as security for the loans should be held responsible would prove a safeguard. But in 1891 the secretary said that the majority of the members "regarded

[54] Ibid., August, 1879, p. 2.
[55] Constitution, 1880, art. 4.
[56] Constitution, 1884, art. 7.
[57] Constitution, 1896, art. 27.
[58] Constitution, 1912, secs. 104–116.
[59] Constitution, 1880, art. 43.
[60] Constitution, 1888, art. 33.

vouching as an empty formality" as was shown by the number of loans then unpaid.[61] President Duncan states that the abuses finally became so flagrant that the entire system was abolished in 1897. There were instances in which three members would unite for the purpose of securing loans. Each would secure a loan with the other two as security, and in many cases none of the money was repaid.[62] In March, 1902, five years after the abolition of the system, the secretary published a list of loans amounting to several thousand dollars which were still unpaid.[63]

The history of the traveling loan in the Flint Glass Workers is much the same. During the earliest years of the union the unemployed who desired to travel in search of employment were furnished transportation by the national union. The applicant was required before a loan was granted to submit satisfactory evidence that he had secured a position. The system proved a complete failure. Secretary Kunzler reported to the convention of 1896 that some members had procured loans by means of false telegrams and letters which purported to show that there were jobs at some place ready for them. He also said that of the $10,000 which had been loaned from 1885 to 1896 only eighteen per cent had been repaid.[64]

At various conventions the union adopted rules which it was thought would safeguard the union against unauthorized loans, but the traveling members always succeeded in evading them. During the years preceding 1902 the system was still further abused and the loans became in reality gifts. Secretary Dobbins reported to the convention of 1902 that of the $3,376.04 loaned during the previous year only $975.53 had been repaid, and a large part of the sum received was deducted from strike benefits and bills sent to the office for personal services. He said that members still persisted in sending to the union letters and telegrams

[61] Granite Cutters' Journal, April, 1891, p. 4.
[62] Letter to the writer, October 20, 1915.
[63] Granite Cutters' Journal, March, 1902, p. 14.
[64] Proceedings, 1896, p. 87.

written by one member to another telling him to come on immediately as there was a job awaiting him, but in the majority of cases the member never transferred to another city.[65] At this convention the membership became so aroused over the granting of illegal loans that there was a movement to abolish the whole system, but it did not succeed.[66]

At the convention in 1904 several new provisions were adopted. The national secretary was to loan no money to members except for transportation expenses and then only when the applicant had a letter or telegram from an employer or local union to prove that the member was guaranteed a job. The member securing the loan was required to sign a promissory note for the amount borrowed and was to pay ten per cent of his earnings until the loan was repaid. The national secretary was to notify the trade by circular of the loans granted and the local unions were held responsible for the debts of their members.[67] As a result of these rules a greater percentage of the loans were repaid, and there was a great increase in the amounts loaned. The union was still unable to force many local unions to collect the loans and in several instances local unions were not permitted to send delegates to the convention because they were not prompt in the collection of loans. Frequently, delegates to the conventions were found to be the worst offenders. In April, 1907, the national secretary issued a pamphlet containing the names of 1304 members who had borrowed an aggregate sum of $24,000, an average of more than $18. Several months later, the secretary reported that he had succeeded in finding only 109 of the debtors. When this was reported to the convention there was little opposition to the abolition of the entire system of traveling loans.[68]

During the next few years the traveling members waged a campaign for the reëstablishment of the loan system and

[65] Proceedings, 1902, pp. 127, 128.
[66] Ibid., p. 203.
[67] Proceedings, 1904, pp. 229, 230.
[68] Proceedings, 1907, pp. 93, 174.

this, coupled with the scarcity of men in some places, led to a reconsideration at the convention in 1910. It was said that the abolition of the system had "worked a hardship upon our members in not being able to secure transportation from one locality to another and that it has caused many complaints from manufacturers on account of many places standing idle in their factories." The convention reëstablished the system with entirely new rules.[69] It was provided that a member should have been unemployed for two weeks and must be free of any indebtedness to the union before he was entitled to a loan. He was required also to show a letter from the employer or local union to prove that he was guaranteed a position. After securing employment ten per cent of his earnings were to be paid until the loan was repaid. A local union which accepted the card of a member who had borrowed transportation expenses and failed to collect ten per cent of his earnings was held responsible for the debt.[70]

During the first year of operation only thirty-five per cent of the loans were repaid and the abuses which characterized the old system soon reappeared.[71] The national officers were powerless to prevent the granting of illegal loans and were unable to force the local-union secretaries to collect the loans when made. The abuses became so flagrant that the system was again abolished at the convention in 1913,[72] and no loans have been granted since January 1, 1914. However, at the convention in 1915 there was a movement for its reëstablishment, but owing to the strong opposition of the officers the motion failed of adoption.[73]

The White Rats Actors established in 1912 a system of traveling loans which was not unlike that of the Flint Glass Workers. Only those members who could show an "enforceable contract with a responsible manager for an engagement" were entitled to a loan. The borrower gave a

[69] Proceedings, 1910, p. 143.
[70] Ibid., p. 153.
[71] Proceedings, 1912, p. 216.
[72] Proceedings, 1913, p. 292.
[73] Proceedings, 1915, p. 315.

promissory note for the amount loaned and agreed to repay the same out of the first week's salary. If he failed to repay the loan, the union attached his wages.[74] With such precautionary measures it was thought that very few losses would result. During 1912 there was loaned $32,000, of which $14,155 was outstanding in April, 1913.[75] During the next two years about $60,000 was loaned and the amount which was not repaid of the loans granted during the three years of the operation of the system was $14,000. Thus the union lost fifteen per cent of the amount loaned. The members decided that the system was costing too much in proportion to the benefits received and abolished it in August, 1915.[76]

The Leather Workers on Horse Goods established a traveling loan system when the union was organized in 1896. It was provided that an unemployed member could obtain from a local union a loan sufficient to transport him to the nearest branch in the direction he wished to travel. The first loan was not to exceed $12.50 while the total amount which could be borrowed in any year was $21.00. The loan was to be repaid in installments of fifteen per cent of the member's weekly earnings.[77] Flagrant abuses soon crept in and the president frequently notified the local union secretaries that many illegal loans were being granted and only a small percentage of loans were being repaid. But no improvement resulted from the publicity given to the abuses, and the system was abolished in October, 1904.[78]

The Machinists, soon after the union was organized, also established a traveling loan system. The loans were granted by the local unions and it appears that they suffered all losses. It had been expected that the local unions would be careful in granting loans and in seeing that they were repaid. In 1895 the president reported that during the two

[74] Constitution, 1912, art. 14, sec. 1.
[75] Letter from Secretary W. W. Waters to the writer, April 22, 1913.
[76] Letter from Secretary to the writer, November 8, 1915.
[77] Constitution, 1896, art. 4, sec. 1.
[78] Leather Workers' Journal, January, 1905, p. 252.

previous years $5,000 had been loaned, and the system had "been unmercifully abused."[79] During the next two years $6,124 was loaned to traveling members. Only a small amount was ever repaid. This was due, the president said, to the fact that there was no provision as to the limit of time for the payment of the loans.[80] At the convention in 1897 it was provided that the loans must be repaid within ten weeks after they were granted.[81] The unemployed member was not granted a loan unless his dues had been paid to date, and the amount that could be borrowed at any one time was not to exceed $5.00, nor could any further loan be secured until the previous one had been repaid. The financial secretary of the local union to which the member traveled was required to collect the sum borrowed and forward it to the local union which granted it. The system failed completely. In 1903 President O'Connell said that only a small percentage of the loans were repaid, that the system had tended to encourage dishonesty, and that it had caused an unlimited number of disputes among the local unions. For these reasons he recommended that it be abolished.[82] The convention in 1903 decided that no further loans would be granted after July 31 of that year.[83]

The system of traveling loans of the Lithographers is similar to that of the Machinists in that the loans are made by the local unions and all losses are met by the local unions. The national constitution provides that any member who desires to travel in search of employment, and is in need of financial assistance shall make application to the local union for a loan. The local executive board investigates the application and grants the loan if the member appears worthy. The amount of the loan is entered in the member's dues-book and it is the duty of the secretary of the local union to which the member transfers, to collect the loan and

[79] Proceedings, 1895, p. 12.
[80] Proceedings, 1897, p. 8.
[81] Constitution, 1897, art. 10, sec. 3.
[82] Proceedings, 1903, p. 402.
[83] Ibid., p. 531.

return it to the local union which granted it.[84] No statistics are available as to the amounts which have been loaned and collected during the existence of the system, but it is said that the members make considerable use of it.

The Deutsch-Amerikanischen Typographia established its traveling benefit in connection with an out-of-work benefit in 1884.[85] This system differed from others in that the traveling member was given the transportation expenses as a gift and not as a loan. An unemployed member in good standing for six months was entitled to two cents per mile for the first two hundred miles and one cent for each additional mile he wished to travel, provided that the total sum did not exceed $10. After spending three months in the local union to which he traveled he was entitled to transportation expenses to another local union, but he could not draw more than $25 in one year. If a member became unemployed through his own fault, he was not entitled to the benefit for three months, and if the position had been given up voluntarily, he could not receive the benefit unless the executive council of the local union approved his action. Those who drew the traveling benefit were supposed to transfer at once to another city or return the amount received. Although the benefit was free, it appears never to have been greatly utilized. For example, in 1907 there were only fifteen members who applied for benefits totaling $104.60. The system was abolished in 1908. Secretary Miller explains that this was on account of the flagrant abuses of the benefit by the members. He says that members living in Chicago and the Middle West when going on a vacation trip to the East or to Europe would draw the maximum benefit. In short, he says, the benefit was used as a means of partly defraying the expenses of members on "holiday trips."[86]

At the Painters' convention in 1910 there was a move-

[84] Constitution, 1913, art. 20, sec. 1.
[85] Letter from Secretary Hugo Miller to the writer, October 19, 1915.
[86] Ibid.

ment to provide traveling members with a loan of not more than $10, but the proposed plan received little attention.[87] The Bricklayers and Masons in 1873[88] and the Plumbers in 1908[89] also considered the advisability of establishing a traveling loan system, but both proposals failed of adoption. At the Typographical convention in 1889 there was proposed a traveling loan of two cents per mile, but it was defeated.[90]

In those unions which have not established a national traveling loan system, some of the local unions maintain funds from which the members who desire to travel may secure a loan, or from which the "traveler" may secure a gift of a few dollars to aid him in transferring to another city. If a member is assured of a job or has fair prospects of securing employment in another city, there is scarcely a local union in any trade which will not advance him the necessary traveling expenses. But if the member applying for a loan is a "traveler," or has little prospect of securing employment in another city, the local unions do not always grant the loan. Generally the amounts of the loans are entered in the members' dues-books and the local unions in which the card is deposited are supposed to collect the loans and return them to the local unions which granted them.

The systems of traveling loans and benefits have failed largely because they have induced needless traveling through the administrative inefficiency of the local-union secretaries. During the first year's operation of the Cigar Makers' system, the condition of trade was bad all over the country. The members were told that there were no jobs to be had in any city,[91] but since the traveler could secure a loan from the union many went in search of work. A traveling loan system is socially injurious when a workman can secure a loan despite the fact that there is no work for him to do in the locality to which he transfers. The union works a hardship upon its members when it grants loans without first

[87] Proceedings, 1910, p. 44.
[88] Proceedings, 1873, p. 27.
[89] Proceedings, 1908, p. 91.
[90] Proceedings, 1889, p. 124.
[91] Cigar Makers' Journal, July 10, 1881, p. 1.

directing members to places where employment may be had. For many years the English trade unions granted traveling benefits in the same manner as do the American unions, that is, without ascertaining whether the member was going to improve his condition by transferring. Within recent years, however, the English system has undergone a considerable change, and traveling loans and benefits are now granted chiefly to those for whom employment has been found in another city. Since traveling loans are now granted in the United States chiefly by the local unions, which usually demand that the applicant shall be assured of employment before the loan is granted, it is probably true that the traveling loan is now somewhat more useful than before.

Another cause of the failure of the traveling loan systems was the granting of unauthorized loans. Although the unions had generally provided apparently stringent rules for the administration of the system, many unauthorized loans were granted. Among the Cigar Makers this abuse appeared at an early date. In 1881 the secretary remarked that he knew of many members who had drawn loans and never left their homes, and of others who claimed money for a distance of two hundred miles and did not go farther than fifty miles.[92] The local union secretaries became so careless in the matter of granting loans that the union made a rule that secretaries who granted unauthorized loans were to be fined $5. In June, 1884, twenty-one secretaries were fined.[93] The loan systems of the German Printers, Granite Cutters, Flint Glass Workers, Leather Workers on Horse Goods, Machinists, and White Rats Actors were abolished primarily on account of the abuses in granting loans. It seems that the local-union secretaries granted loans in practically all cases, simply trusting that, as the loan was entered in the members' dues-books, the local unions to which they traveled would collect the money.

Through the carelessness of the secretaries in the administration of the systems the amounts of loans which were

[92] Ibid., p. 1.
[93] Ibid., July, 1884, p. 3.

not repaid were very large in some cases. During the thirty-five years existence of the Cigar Makers' system, there has been expended $1,337,271, or an average of $38,207 each year. The amount loaned per capita has varied from 63 cents in 1880 to $3.48 in 1884, and has averaged during the period $1.50. On the first of January, 1915, there were outstanding loans to the amount of $109,220.31. President Perkins states that of this sum about one-half is collectible.[94] Thus the cost of the system for thirty-five years has been about $55,000, an average annual per capita of 8 cents. The Flint Glass Workers have not expended nearly so much on their system as the Cigar Makers. During the ten years in which loans were granted, the sum of $37,821 was expended, an average of $3,782. The amount loaned per capita varied from 10 cents in 1914 to 73 cents in 1907, and the average annual per capita expenditure was 50 cents. When the system was abandoned the sum of $15,589 was outstanding. Since only a small percentage of this was collectible, the annual average net cost per capita was $1.50, or twenty times the cost to the Cigar Makers. The Leather Workers on Horse Goods loaned during the seven years in which the system was in operation the sum of $17,063. The annual per capita expenditure was 57 cents, and the loans outstanding when the system was abolished amounted to $2,526. Thus the annual average per capita cost was less than 9 cents, or about the same as that of the Cigar Makers. In the Typographia, despite the fact that the benefit was a gift, the cost was very small. During the twenty-four years' operation of the benefit the sum of $8,376 was expended. The average annual per capita cost varied from 10 cents in 1907 to 61 cents in 1885 and only averaged 31 cents for the entire period.

The following tables give the cost and other financial details of the systems in the Cigar Makers, Typographia, Flint Glass Workers, and Leather Workers on Horse Goods.

[94] Letter to the writer, October 19, 1915.

Cost of the Maintenance of the Traveling Loan Benefit

Year	Cigar Makers			Typographia		Flint Glass Workers		Leather Workers on Horse Goods		
	Amount Loaned	Per Capita	Unpaid	Amount Paid	Per Capita	Amount Loaned	Per Capita	Amount Loaned	Per Capita	Loans Outstanding
1880	$ 2,808.15	$ .63	$ 1,182.80							
1881	12,747.09	.87	8,080.13							
1882	20,386.64	1.78	9,951.61							
1883	37,135.20	2.81	21,030.35							
1884	39,632.08	3.48	30,665.70							
1885	26,683.54	2.22	35,122.50	$345.50	$.61					
1886	31,835.71	1.29	36,806.59	264.10	.27					
1887	49,281.04	2.34	47,813.70	483.45	.44					
1888	42,894.75	2.50	54,046.96	669.29	.59					
1889	43,540.44	2.71	56,489.72	456.17	.40					
1890	37,914.72	1.53	52,499.64	576.65	.46					
1891	53,535.73	2.21	60,764.74	622.47	.47					
1892	47,732.47	1.78	58,924.46	797.19	.57					
1893	60,475.11	2.25	78,143.98	439.64	.31					
1894	42,154.17	1.52	82,975.37	680.96	.56					
1895	41,657.16	1.50	87,904.55	304.46	.27					
1896	33,076.22	1.39	91,301.49	339.86	.30					
1897	29,067.04	1.10	88,601.20	279.50	.25					
1898	25,237.43	.95	83,080.53	390.62	.35					
1899	24,234.33	.83	75,542.11	320.74	.29			$ 102.00	$ .10	$ 62.00
1900	33,238.13	.97	75,014.50	178.79	.17			249.00	.11	136.50
1901	44,652.73	1.31	80,155.94	175.05	.17			639.25	.20	244.30
1902	45,314.05	1.22	78,325.95	107.28	.11	$3,376.04	$.50	2,504.85	.60	1,137.20
1903	52,521.41	1.33	82,114.55	159.56	.16	5,018.75	.63	3,526.65	.73	1,894.75
1904	58,728.71	1.41	88,382.44	181.85	.18	5,531.24	.76	7,415.25	1.61	4,112.85
1905	55,293.93	1.37	93,040.65	195.46	.20	4,641.99	.66	2,626.50	.64	2,526.80

Year	Cigar Makers			Typographia		Flint Glass Workers		Leather Workers on Horse Goods		
	Amount Loaned	Per Capita	Unpaid	Amount Paid	Per Capita	Amount Loaned	Per Capita	Amount Loaned	Per Capita	Loans Outstanding
1906	50,650.21	1.29	94,611.07	147.52	.15	3,953.82	.57			
1907	50,063.86	1.21	99,332.43	104.60	.10	5,059.71	.73			
1908	46,613.44	1.15	109,142.35	155.30	.16					
1909	41,589.34	.94	112,111.31							
1910	39,828.77	.91	112,479.30							
1911	38,543.47	.90	117,455.17			4,542.87	.50			
1912	33,113.10	.82	117,162.65			2,086.17	.24			
1913	45,264.82	1.12	102,487.62			2,503.18	.25			
1914	51,077.15	1.27	109,220.31			1,051.65	.10			
Total....	$1,337.271.93			$8,376.01		$37,821.83		$17,063.50		
Average .	$38,207.77	$1.50			$.31		$.50	$2,437.64	$.57	

In conclusion, there are certain definite hindrances to the movement of union workmen from one city to another which very largely nullify in some unions the attempts to promote a better distribution of labor. As has already been noted, many unions have delegated to their local unions the power to fix the amount of the initiation fee. They have also provided that a member transferring to a local union in which the initiation fee is greater than in the city from which the member transferred must pay the difference before his card is accepted. Members of the Carpenters[95] and Painters[96] of less than one year's standing are obliged to pay such differences when they travel from one city to another. Since some local unions have established high initiation fees in order to discourage members from traveling, the amount to be paid before a working card can be obtained is sometimes sufficient to deter members from transferring.

Another condition which operates to hinder transference in those unions which have only local systems of death and sick benefits, is that a member transferring from one local union to another forfeits all claims to benefits in the union from which he goes unless he pays the dues and assessments to that association, and does not become a beneficiary in the local union to which he transfers until he has been a member for a certain period, generally one year.

The rules governing seniority rights and privileges, which were discussed in a previous chapter, have a marked effect upon the transference of workmen. Indeed, in some unions this system has made traveling a negligible factor. Thus, President Carter of the Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen says that members of this union rarely transfer from one place to another or from one company to another unless they are among the last on the list.[97] A member who has been employed by a railroad for several years has usually secured favorable seniority rights and when laid off by the

[95] Constitution, 1913, sec. 106.
[96] Constitution, 1913, sec. 50.
[97] Letter to the writer, October 19, 1915.

company on account of depressed business conditions, hesitates to apply for employment in another division of the road or to another company because his seniority rights would not be recognized and he would be compelled to start at the bottom of the list, thus losing all he had gained during his former employment. Professor Barnett has pointed out how the priority rights of the Printers have operated to decrease mobility of labor because of the fact that the most efficient printer can not transfer his priority rights from one city to another or from one shop to another.[98]

The "permit" system, discussed in a previous chapter, was shown to have been conceived with the idea of controlling the number of members of the unions. Although this is the primary reason for its existence, the local unions have succeeded in utilizing it to prevent the movement of members from other local unions. These local unions when in need of men will not attempt to procure experienced workmen from other localities, but will issue permits to inexperienced "handy men." The local unions appreciate the fact that after employment slackens they can revoke the permits of the helpers, but where they have secured union members from other cities they probably could not get rid of them when employment became scarce. This phase of the permit system has come into prominence during the past few years. The Elevator Constructors at their convention in 1904 provided that the local unions should apply to other cities for workmen before issuing permits,[99] but it appears that this rule is violated. President Murphy recently stated that the local unions favored the permit system principally because they could provide the employers with sufficient men without procuring members from other cities.[100] The secretary of the Brewery Workers has said that the local unions, "due to their selfishness," used permit workmen in time of prosperity rather than apply for men from the nearby cities.[101]

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[98] Barnett, The Printers, p. 241.
[99] Proceedings, 1904, p. 7.
[100] Interview, August, 1915.
[101] Proceedings, 1910, p. 160.

CHAPTER V

Distribution of Employment

Unemployment due to contraction of demand may be either concentrated upon a part of the working force, or be distributed more or less equally among the entire working force. In both cases the aggregate wages will be the same, and the total amount of unemployment will not have been decreased. The difference to the individual workman, however, is very great. It is obvious that if an employer expends two dollars for labor, it would be socially more advantageous to divide the employment between two otherwise unemployed workmen than to concentrate it upon one of them; there would be less suffering if each of the two had one dollar than if one man possessed the two dollars.

It must be realized, however, that there are conditions in particular industries which tend to make the adoption of such a policy socially injurious. Thus, the longshoremen are confronted with the problem of having the work distributed among too great a number of workmen. The policy has also been disadvantageously used by the unions in certain trades in which machinery has displaced a great number of workmen, when they have attempted to so distribute employment as to maintain the original working forces.[1] In such cases the problem is different and the policy of equal distribution of employment is open to criticism. But where the contraction of demand is due to temporary fluctuations, equal distribution of employment meets with but few valid objections.

The distribution of employment is accomplished chiefly in the following ways: (1) Reduction of the working hours per day or week of the entire force of workmen. (2) Di-

[1] Typographical Journal, March, 1915, p. 456.

vision of the working force into groups, each working the normal day or week in rotation. (3) Reduction of the working hours to a certain point, after which the smaller amount of employment is met by a dismissal of workmen. In some trades one of these methods exists, while in others two or three of them are found side by side. It will be the aim in this chapter to inquire as to the extent to which these various methods are utilized in the more highly organized trades and the influence of the union in bringing about their adoption.

The first method—the working of short time—exists as a general custom in the following unions: United Mine Workers, Western Federation of Miners, Ladies Garment Workers, United Garment Workers, Tailors, Cloth Hat and Cap Makers, Textile Workers, Glove Makers, Hatters, Potters, Flint Glass Workers, and Iron, Steel and Tin Workers. It is not to be inferred that short time is not used in other unions, because, as will be pointed out later, this method exists, to a certain extent, in almost every trade. But it is only in the unions named that the practice is in force throughout the jurisdiction of the unions.

The United Mine Workers and the Western Federation of Miners have probably a more effective system of sharing work than that practised in any other union. When the operator has secured a force of miners sufficient to properly work his mine in the busy season, he is rarely allowed to reduce this number on account of a slackened demand for coal. He is obliged to give to every workman an equal number of hours' work in the mine. As the dull season approaches, he reduces the number of days to be worked each week. When the demand for coal is not sufficient to justify the working of a full day, then only a certain number of hours are worked. In any event, each workman must be given the same number of hours of employment. In consequence of these demands of the union and of the seasonal character of the industry, the mines are idle during many days of the year. In the period 1900–1910 the

number of idle days in the anthracite fields varied from 71 in 1910 to 184 in 1902, and in the bituminous fields from 66 in 1907 to 107 in 1908.[2] Although this system was generally in force before the miners became strongly organized, and is at present the rule in a number of non-union mines, the foremen under non-union conditions were always at liberty to discharge a man when a reduction of the working force was desired. The union now passes judgment upon discharges, and the employer must prove that other reasons than the desire to reduce the working force are the cause of the discharge.

Not only does the union demand an equal distribution of working time, but "every mine worker shall be given work in his turn when applying for same."[3] Obviously, the foreman might allow every man to descend into the mine, but could place them in such a position that some would secure only a few cars each day. There have been instances where a miner stayed in the mine all day and never got a pit car to load. The rule was devised not to equalize the miners' earnings or to limit the output but to give every man an equal opportunity to work. In mines where both machine and pick miners are used the union has obtained a rule that whenever the machines are operated and the pick miners not employed, "such turn shall be given that will, as nearly as possible, equalize the earning capacity of the machine loaders and the pick miners."[4]

Where an operator closes down one of his mines and works full time in another, the union has not attempted to enforce any arrangement by which those unemployed through the closing of one mine may share in the working of the other; but there has grown up in many mining communities a custom under which the work is divided. John Mitchell says of this custom: "This system of dividing

[2] United States Geological Survey: Mineral Resources of the United States, vol. 2, 1910, p. 42.

[3] 1913 Agreement, Interstate Movement (Proceedings of the United Mine Workers, 1914, p. 44).

[4] Machine Scale in Arkansas and Oklahoma, 1912, sec. 7, in Proceedings of the United Mine Workers, 1914, p. 71.

employment is quite general in mining communities. If an employer closes down one of his mines and continues others in operation, the men in the mine that is working will invite their fellow unionists where work has been stopped to share their employment with them. That is to say, the men who retain their jobs will remain at home three days each week, allowing the men out of employment to take their places for the remaining three days."[5]

These various rules have resulted in such a thoroughgoing distribution of employment that it would seem as though nothing could better the distribution short of an absolute limitation on daily earnings. It has been suggested that these regulations have had a tendency to retain so great a number of workmen in the industry that the earnings are not sufficient for proper living conditions. On the other hand, the conditions surrounding the industry are such that a greater number of workmen are needed at certain seasons. In the anthracite fields, production is more nearly regular throughout the year in consequence of a sliding scale of prices to the consumer, while in the bituminous fields the coal can only be mined as needed, because the atmospheric effects upon this grade of coal are such that for domestic purposes it must be consumed shortly after it is mined. Consequently, in the winter months there is needed a relatively larger force of bituminous than of anthracite miners.

The most significant case in which the policy of the unions towards the question at issue is revealed is in the garment industry. Since the signing of the agreement in 1911 between the Ladies Garment Workers and the employers of New York, the distribution of employment has been one of the chief contentions between the union and the employers' association. During the first nine months of the operation of the Protocol 186 of the 998 grievances submitted to the Board of Grievances were alleged discriminations in the distribution of work. From September to December, 1911, 53 of the 295 grievances were of the same character.[6]

[5] The Bridgemen's Magazine, January, 1910, p. 12.
[6] Bulletin of the Bureau of Labor, No. 98, p. 230.

Previous to 1911, when the workmen were poorly organized, the employer allowed the foreman in each department to distribute the work as best suited him. In one factory, the question of race decided who was to get the lion's share of the work; in another, it was a question of favoritism or, perhaps, a bribe to the foreman. Some piece workers were allowed to work the entire day and far into the night, while others, who were reporting each day to the factory, were refused any employment. To remedy these conditions, the Ladies Garment Workers Union insisted in the conferences preliminary to the signing of the Protocol upon a more equitable distribution of employment, and secured a rule which requires the employer to divide employment, as far as possible, among all regular piece and time workers.

The distribution takes the form of either short time or rotation of the workers. The manufacturers do not object strenuously to the application of this rule to piece workers, but have, by many subterfuges, attempted to evade its application to time workers. The difficulty has been the interpretation of the term "regular workmen." The union contends that this includes all who have been working for the employer, while the manufacturers claim that it only includes those who are employed during the slack seasons and does not include those taken on during the rush periods. In December, 1914, this question was submitted to the Board of Arbitration in the Cloak, Suit and Skirt Industry of New York. The Chairman, Mr. Louis D. Brandeis, gave the following decision: "Equal division of work is to be regarded as desirable and as necessary in this industry; for it must be acknowledged that it should be made possible for the people called into the industry, and who are regularly employed therein, to earn a reasonable livelihood." But as to what constituted a "regular" workman, the Board refused to give an interpretation, merely saying that this question "must be left to the judgment of men familiar with the particular facts, because the facts will vary in par-

ticular cases."[7] Aside from this disputed question, the fifty thousand union ladies garment workers of New York are working under rules guaranteeing them a fairly equal distribution of employment. In the Boston Protocol of 1913,[8] and in the Philadelphia Protocol of 1914,[9] the union secured provisions for an equal distribution of work among its members. In other cities both the agreements with the employers' associations and with individual manufacturers provide for an equal division of employment.

The United Garment Workers and the Tailors have insisted at all times upon an equal distribution of work among their members, but they have not met with the same success as the Ladies Garment Workers, doubtless on account of the lack of general agreements with employers' associations. In their agreements with individual manufacturers, these unions have generally obtained an equal distribution of employment among the regular workmen; but with regard to what constitutes a regular employee, and as to when the workmen may be discharged on account of the reorganization of the factory, the unions and the employers have not been able to agree. Differences on these points have led to many strikes in the clothing industry. In Baltimore, in August, 1912, three hundred men went on strike because the firm insisted upon laying off a pocket maker instead of distributing the work among the fourteen members in this particular department. In 1914 another Baltimore employer attempted to discharge a certain number of men on account of "a reorganization of the factory." In this case the union asked for a distribution of the work, which the employers refused and the consequence was a strike involving two thousand men. Wherever possible, the unions have attempted to induce the employers to work short time instead of discharging a portion of the working force, and they have recently secured the acceptance of this policy by many employers.

[7] Ladies Garment Worker, February, 1915, pp. 11–14.
[8] Ibid., May, 1913, p. 17.
[9] Ibid., October, 1914, p. 12.

The Cloth Hat and Cap Makers have always insisted upon the employment in the dull seasons of all members who were in the working force in the busy season. The union has secured the establishment of this policy in all shops where the workmen are paid piece wages, but has been unable to enforce it in the shops where time wages are paid.[10] The Textile Workers Union recently demanded the incorporation in their agreements with the manufacturers of an article providing for equal distribution of employment. There was but little opposition, and the movement has been generally successful. Even in non-union establishments the manufacturers have followed this policy for many years, although they do not always include the entire working force, and sometimes leave certain employees out of the distribution.

The Glove Makers, in all of their agreements with the employers, have secured provision for an equal distribution of employment in the dull seasons. The employers are required to give to each piece worker not the same number of pieces but work which will yield equal wages.[11] While there is no written agreement between the Hatters and their employers as to the distribution of work in slack periods, there is, as President Lawlor terms it, "a gentleman's agreement" that short time will be worked in the dull months, and no employee may be laid off on account of such dullness.[12] One of the chief contentions in the great Danbury lockout of 1890 was over the distribution of work. The manufacturers claimed that they should be allowed to regulate the distribution of employment, while the union claimed an equal division of work.[13] Since that time, with but few exceptions, the policy of equal distribution of employment among the entire working force has been accepted in full by the employers.

[10] Interview with Secretary Zuckerman, August, 1915.
[11] Interview with Secretary Christman, August, 1915.
[12] Interview, August, 1915.
[13] The Sixth Annual Report of the Connecticut Bureau of Labor Statistics, Part V, p. 191.

If the policy of equal distribution of employment is to be generally enforced in a trade, there is need for a strong organization of employers to deal with that of the workmen. In every trade there are certain employers who will accede to the demands of the union for the distribution of work; but there are also others who, although they may agree to the standard rate, the normal day, and union working conditions, will not readily relinquish their right to hire and discharge as they see fit. Consequently, there is a greater likelihood of finding the system of equal distribution of employment widely enforced in those trades where the associations of employers and workmen hold conferences and make agreements for the entire trade. The most striking examples of systems of this kind are in the pottery and glass industries.

The National Brotherhood of Operative Potters for many years unsuccessfully attempted to obtain the consent of the United States Potters' Association—the manufacturers of general ware—to incorporating in the agreements a rule requiring equal distribution of work among all employees. At the conference in 1911 the manufacturers agreed to adopt this rule and to work short time in the slack seasons, instead of continuing the practice of concentrating the work upon those favored by the foreman.[14] The union also secured from the Sanitary Manufacturing Potters' Association at the conference in 1912 a rule similar to that in force in the general ware department, except that the work was to be divided equally among workmen making the same class of ware.[15] For instance, if a manufacturer were to close entirely the lavatory ware department of his factory and retain jet makers at full time, the pressers in the former department would not share in the work. To this the union strongly objected, maintaining that as "the pressers are at

[14] Agreement between the United States Potters' Association and the National Brotherhood of Operative Potters, Atlantic City, New Jersey, 1911, sec. 11.

[15] Agreement between the Sanitary Manufacturing Potters' Association and the National Brotherhood of Operative Potters, 1912, p. 1.

all times expected and, in fact, compelled to make any kind of articles given them," the work of the entire plant should be equally divided among all those competent to do it.[16] The Potters on several occasions have struck to enforce the rule requiring an equal distribution of work. For example, in March, 1914, the pressers in one of the Trenton potteries struck because several pressers had been discharged by the firm on the ground that the force was larger than was needed.[17] In April of the same year the pressers in a pottery at Mannington, West Virginia, went on strike for reasons connected with the rule.[18]

In the Flint Glass Workers' Union the necessity for some rule under which its members might be guaranteed more continuous employment was early recognized. Glass factories do not produce at maximum capacity during more than six or eight months even in the most prosperous years. In 1897 President Smith said that the existing custom was for the employers to lay off a certain number of their workmen when trade slackened, and to retain on full time those who stood highest in the estimation of the foreman. Almost invariably the slow workers, or those who "had suggested that the employees have rights that should be respected," were among those laid off. This custom, in the opinion of the president, was so strongly entrenched in the trade by long usage that there was great doubt as to the possibility of establishing any better system.[19] However, the convention of that year proposed that all departments should attempt to induce the employers to distribute fairly the work.[20] Since then each of the sixteen departments of the industry, at their conferences with the employers, have obtained rules providing for an equal distribution of work. Most of the agreements provide for distribution among all who are found competent, regardless of the class of work

[16] Proceedings, 1914, pp. 76–77.
[17] Potters' Herald, March 26, 1914, p. 2.
[18] Ibid., April 23, 1914.
[19] Proceedings, 1897, pp. 57–58.
[20] Ibid., 1897, p. 175.

at which they were formerly employed. The cutters and mould makers, however, have less stringent rules. In the former department, the employer is allowed in a period of slackness to lay off the men engaged during a rush period, provided such employment was for less than four weeks.[21] In the Mould Making Department an employer is required to share the work among all the working force except workmen who have not held their positions for six months.[22]

The rule has led to many disputes between the employers and the union, and even between different factions in the union. The controversies became so numerous that at the conference in 1911 between the manufacturers and the union the interpretation of the rule was brought up for settlement. The conclusion which was reached in conference was rejected on reference by both the manufacturers and the union. The only provision which was accepted by both parties was that "whenever the necessity for a division of time arises, the factory committee and the management shall agree on a satisfactory division."[23]

In the iron and steel industries, the practice of working short time in periods of depression has become a generally accepted policy in many union and non-union mills. However, the manufacturers have frequently used other means of curtailing production, such as running single instead of double turn, and of closing a certain number of their furnaces. The Iron, Steel and Tin Workers' Union adopted in 1886 the following rule to cover such cases: "Should any department of a mill be stopped running single or double turn, through over-production, or other causes, the work shall be equally divided, except where a furnace is out for repairs."[24] The union has also provided that any mill, running double or triple turns during three or more months of the year, shall be considered a double turn mill, and in the event of such a mill going on single time, the work shall

[21] Proceedings, 1913, p. 216.
[22] Proceedings, 1912, p. 167.
[23] Proceedings, 1912, p. 97.
[24] Proceedings, 1886, p. 1851.

be divided equally among the different crews.[25] For many years, through the influence of the members who were holding regular positions, this rule was not obeyed by many of the local lodges. There was also disagreement as to the proper method of dividing the work. Various plans were adopted. In some mills the men worked in rotation, while in others three and four shifts were worked. In the period of depression from 1893 to 1896 the mills worked short time, but did not employ the men laid off on account of the closing of certain furnaces. President Garland of the Amalgamated Association advocated the adoption of a three-shift system and it appears that this plan was put into effect in many mills, for the president reported to the convention in 1898 that seventy-five per cent of the members were then working under the three-shift system.[26] At the convention of 1900 several lodges asked for the privilege of working four shifts in order to help the great number of unemployed, but they were advised to divide the work in some other manner.[27] During 1901 many lodges reported that they had formed floating crews from those who had worked at furnaces which were then idle, and allowed them to work in rotation with the regular crews.[28] This method was suggested to the American Tinplate Company by President Garland when he went to New York in 1901 to plead the cause of the unemployed.[29] At present the manufacturers and the union have agreed that, in all cases, the work shall be distributed among all of the workmen, except those who have not been members of the union for thirty days.

The general trade agreement between the Glass Bottle Blowers and the employers provides for the employment of idle men by changing the factory from a two to a three shift system in dull seasons. When this is not practicable, the shop committee and the manufacturer are to arrange

[25] Constitution, 1913, art. 17, sec. 6.
[26] Proceedings, 1898, p. 5418.
[27] Proceedings, 1900, p. 5839.
[28] Amalgamated Journal, February 14, 1901, p. 18.
[29] Ibid., p. 20.

some other method for an equal division of employment among the workmen.[30] In consequence of the introduction of automatic machinery, the three-shift system has been widely established as the normal arrangement throughout the year. Where this is the case the distribution of work on account of seasonal variations must be accomplished in some other manner. Another rule agreed to by the manufacturers provided that when a majority of blowers in a factory agree to do so, the work may be divided among all. It appears, however, that this rule is enforced in only a small part of the factories. President Hayes in 1908 referred to several instances in which the local unions had asked for an equal distribution of employment and the employers had acceded to their request, but many of the local unions did not avail themselves of this opportunity.[31] At the convention in 1914 President Hayes urged the members to pay more attention to this provision,[32] but it appeared that some of the members were not in favor of dividing work because of its tendency to keep in the trade more men than necessary.

As stated above, there are very few trades outside of the building trades,[33] in which short time is not worked in particular cases. The practice is found among the Stove Mounters, Paper Makers, Coopers, Leather Workers on Horse Goods, Metal Polishers, Lithographers, Boot and Shoe Workers, Photo-Engravers, Lace Operatives, Laundry Workers, in the stove branch of the Iron Molders, and to a less extent, among the Bakers, Bookbinders, Pattern Makers, Commercial Telegraphers, and the Street Railway Employees.

The second method by which employment is distributed—the system of rotation—is less prevalent than the working

[30] Wage Scale and Working Rules, Glass Vial and Bottle List, for the Blast of 1913–1914, sec. 14, p. 76.

[31] Proceedings, 1908, p. 54.

[32] Proceedings, 1914, p. 109.

[33] An exception in the building trades appears to be the Granite Cutters. On several occasions some of the local unions have provided for a temporary shortening of the working day from eight to six hours, in order to provide work for the unemployed. For example, see Granite Cutters' Journal, April, 1915, p. 4.

of short time. When the charges for lighting, heating, superintendence, etc., are fairly constant whether the employer is working his full force or only a portion of it, it is obvious that it would be a considerable saving were he to operate his plant on part time with the full force, instead of operating full time with a portion of the force. On the other hand, when conditions in the industry are such that it is necessary to maintain an average daily output in the dull season, or when it is economical to keep a portion of the machinery in operation continuously, the method of rotation is more advantageous to the employer than the working of short time.

These considerations are well illustrated in the case of the Brewery Workers. Here the manufacturers desire the uninterrupted operation of their breweries on account of conditions growing out of the methods of brewing and out of the regularity of sales of their product. For many years prior to the formation of a strong organization among the brewery workers, the employers generally met the slack season by a dismissal of a part of their working forces. Inasmuch as this frequently resulted in the laying off of one half of the force, the organized workers demanded a more equitable distribution of employment during the winter months. By 1901 the demands of the union had resulted in the incorporation in the majority of agreements with the employers of a rule requiring an equal distribution of work among the entire working force in the slack season. The secretary reported to the convention in 1901 that "almost every contract now contains a clause providing that during the slack times in winter, comrades shall be laid off alternately for a week at a time.[34] Employers of large breweries have only occasionally objected to this method of meeting seasonal fluctuations, but in small breweries the union has always had to struggle for the acceptance of the rule. There are usually only a few thoroughly competent brewers in a small brewery, and their work is divided in such a man-

[34] Proceedings, 1901, p. 49.

ner that when some of them are laid off the efficiency of the working force is greatly impaired. To meet this condition, the union has conceded that short time may be worked in those breweries where rotation is impracticable. Even where the system of rotation is practised, the union has insisted on a reduction in working hours from nine during the busy season to eight in the winter, and has prohibited the working of any overtime when the men are working short time or in rotation.

The adoption of these methods of meeting seasonal fluctuations in the brewery industry is due to the constant struggle of the union. As the general secretary has said, "the master brewers have worked tooth and nail to eradicate the lay-off clauses in the agreements."[35] Recently the members of the union in Washington, D. C., and Wilmington, Delaware, have been locked out because of their insistence upon an equal distribution of employment. In Washington the employers wished to discharge a certain percentage of the workmen and to divide the employment among the remaining working force; but the union refused to accede to anything except a division of the work among the original working forces.[36] Secretary Proebstle of the Brewery Workers says that the union attaches the same importance to the question of distribution of employment as it does to wages and hours, for without the maintenance of this policy, the workmen would be unable to provide proper living conditions.[37]

The Amalgamated Glass Workers' Union compels its subordinate local unions to insert in their agreements with the employers a clause providing for an equal distribution of work in the slack season.[38] This generally takes the form of rotation, although in several cases, as for example, in the 1914 agreement with the employers of Cincinnati, Ohio,

[35] Reports of the General Secretary-Treasurer in the Proceedings, 1903, p. 157.
[36] For a complete description of the lockout, see Brauerei-Arbeiter Zeitung, April, 1915.
[37] Interview, August, 1915.
[38] Constitution, 1913, sec. 151.

it is provided that "in dull times the working hours shall be reduced so as to give each member employed an equal amount of working time."[39] Several of the unions chartered by the American Federation of Labor, such as the Crown Cork and Seal Operatives, and the Watch Case Engravers, provide for rotation in the dull seasons, and, as has been pointed out above, the Ladies' Garment Workers, the Iron, Steel and Tin Workers, the Glass Bottle Blowers, and the Flint Glass Workers combine the method of rotation and the method of short-time.

The third method by which distribution of employment is accomplished—short time to meet a slight fluctuation, but dismissal of workmen to meet a longer fluctuation—is very common. It is obvious that this method will be preferred in those trades in which it is particularly desirable to retain the most valuable workmen. In the mechanical departments of the railroads and, in fact, in the majority of shops where members of the Boilermakers, Machinists, Iron Molders, Blacksmiths, Metal Polishers, Sheet Metal Workers, and Pattern Makers are employed, this method is in general practice. A typical agreement is that between the Rock Island Federated Trades and the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railway, as follows: "When reducing expenses, the full force of men will be retained, and reduction made in hours until the number of hours shall have reached forty per week; but any further reduction will be made by laying off men, seniority and ability to govern."[40] Occasionally the reverse of this method is employed; that is, a slight fluctuation is met by a dismissal of workmen, while any further fluctuation is provided for by the working of short time. This is less likely to meet the approval of the workmen, but is more advantageous to the employers in that they are enabled to dismiss the less efficient at the first opportunity.

The "five-day" rule of some of the local unions of the

[39] Agreement between the Cincinnati, Ohio, local union of the Amalgamated Glass Workers and the employers, 1914, art. 6, sec. 1.
[40] Boilermakers' Journal, February, 1912, p. 107.

Typographical Union is an interesting example of this method. This rule has grown out of the "six-day-law" which was discussed in a previous chapter. Its operation is limited to seasonal fluctuations and periods of general industrial depression. Under the rule, those who are regularly employed are obliged to give to the unemployed the opportunity to work one day each week, the regular force being limited to five days employment. The employers have strenuously objected to this rule and a number of local unions that have adopted it in periods of unemployment have been forced to abandon it, either because the unemployed were attracted from other cities, or because of the employers' objections.[41] When on December 27, 1914, the 180 printers employed in the three newspaper plants of New Orleans were locked out, one of the important contentions was that the local union had passed a rule compelling its members to share all work beyond forty hours per week with the unemployed.[42] The employers declared that the local union had abrogated the contract existing between the employers and the union "by passing and arbitrarily putting into effect a five-day law in our several offices," thus "disturbing the working conditions therein at an increase of expense to the publishers and a decrease of the efficiency of their respective composing rooms."[43] The five-day rule is found to a limited extent in some other unions, as for instance, in many local unions of the Bakers during the dull seasons.

Despite the wide prevalence of systems of distribution, the commonest means of reducing the production of the working force is to discharge part of the force. This method not only exists among the unskilled and the unorganized, but in well-organized and skilled trades. It is the almost universal custom among the thousands of workmen in the building trades and is accepted by many of the strongest unions. Such strong unions as the Printers and the

[41] Barnett, The Printers, p. 225.
[42] Typographical Journal, March, 1915, p. 344.
[43] Ibid., February, 1915, p. 174.

Railroad Brotherhoods in their agreements with employers concede to the latter the absolute right to discharge as many as they please in the dull seasons, merely asking that the seniority rights of the workmen be respected. Thus, the majority of the members of the American unions, it may be safely said, are not affected by rules which provide for a distribution of employment.

In view of the widely varying practices of the unions, it is pertinent to inquire what are the differences among the trades and industries which lead to these differences in trade-union policy. Broadly speaking these trade characteristics are as follows:

(1) The greater differences in efficiency among workmen in one trade than in another.

(2) The greater value, other than general efficiency, of certain workmen to a particular employer.

(3) The greater expense and difficulty incurred in recruiting the working force in the busy seasons.

(4) Differences in the factors affecting overhead charges.

1. The first set of factors is, without doubt, the dominating influence in the greater number of cases. The capacity of workmen varies considerably in some trades. The extent of this difference depends chiefly upon the character of the trade, it being greater in those cases where the skill of the workman is the controlling factor in production. Inasmuch as the members of unions are employed at standard rates, and as this minimum has generally become the maximum, the employer is usually paying different wage rates per unit of efficiency to his various workmen. Therefore, when an employer is forced to curtail production, it is more economical for him to dismiss those workmen who are less competent than to retain the entire force either on short-time or in rotation. The differentiation in favor of the more competent is, of course, greater in those trades where time-wages are paid. It is therefore to be expected that the dismissal of workmen in the slack seasons will be found more frequently where time-wages are paid, and that short-

time and rotation will be more common in industries where piece-wages are paid. Of the twelve unions whose members work short-time in periods of seasonal and cyclical fluctuations, ten are in trades paying piece-wages; and one of the two unions whose members work in rotation in the dull seasons is a trade with piece-wages.

A union whose experience illustrates the difficulty of forcing the working of short-time where time-wages are paid and the comparative ease of enforcing it among piece-workers, is the Ladies' Garment Workers of New York. The protocol of 1911 provided for an equal distribution of work among the entire working force, but the union soon found that, although the manufacturers retained all the piece workers in dull seasons, many of the employees who were paid time-wages were being discharged. The employers were reluctant to keep all of the time-workers since many of them were not worth the standard rate of pay in the dull season. The Cloth Hat and Cap Workers' Union has similarly been unable to enforce in shops paying time-wages its rule requiring an equal distribution of employment while those shops where piece-wages are paid have not objected to the rule.[44] The secretary of the Lithographers, also, states that the only reason that the Lithographers have been unsuccessful in their attempts to secure an equal distribution of employment in the slack seasons is that they are paid time-wages.[45]

It is not to be inferred, however, that all piece-working trades can enforce distribution of employment. For here, too, the inferiority of some workers to others may play a prominent part. It is said that the daily product of glass blowers varies as much as fifty per cent between one workman and another, and as the costs for heating a tank of glass and other incidental expenses are the same for the man who blows five gross of bottles as for the man who blows ten, it is obvious that the employer would prefer to reduce his working force instead of working short-time.

[44] Interview, August, 1915.
[45] Interview with Secretary O'Connor, August, 1915.

2. In many skilled trades the class of work varies considerably from one shop to another and an employee of one concern may be obliged to familiarize himself with the conditions peculiar to that establishment. These peculiarities may relate to the machinery, the process, the materials or even the patrons of the company. Through a knowledge of these conditions many workmen are an indispensable part of the concern. In such cases the employer will be more likely to use the method of short-time or of rotation rather than to dismiss a part of the working force, because when the full force is again required he may not be able to secure the services of the dismissed men.

3. In trades where an employer can reasonably expect to recruit his working force with but little difficulty or expense, there is less incentive for him to work short-time in the dull seasons. This is the case generally with employers of unskilled and semi-skilled workmen. So far as skilled workers are concerned much depends upon the size of the industrial community and the normal reserve of labor. When there is more than one establishment in a community, there is a greater probability that workmen can be obtained when they are needed. When a workman is dismissed from the only establishment in his community at which he can secure employment, he will generally move to a community where his chances for employment are greater. The primary reason for short-time employment among the coal and ore miners, textile, and lumber workers, is that the employers are forced to give to each workman some employment to induce him to remain in the community, in order that his services may be available in the busy season. In the large industrial centers employers are not generally forced to adopt this policy, because the normal reserve of labor is sufficient to furnish the number of workmen which will be required when he increases his working force.

4. In some industries there are important expenses which are constant, regardless of the number of workmen employed. Thus, charges for light, heat, power, superintend-

ence, and subsidiary labor may involve such an expense that it will be more economical for the manufacturer to employ the entire force on short time, as for example, every other week, than to work full time, dismissing the less efficient workmen. In other industries this expense may be so small as to have no influence upon the method to be used.

Throughout this chapter the attempt has been made to show the position of the unions in the demand for an equal distribution of employment in the dull seasons. Naturally stress has been laid on the objections of the employers, but in the unions themselves there are certain influential elements which have steadily opposed a more equitable distribution of employment.

In the greater number of local unions there are certain members comprising the more efficient workmen, who dominate the business transacted by the union. Whenever the seasonal fluctuation is of such intensity as to cause the dismissal of some of these "regulars," the local union is insistent upon an equal division of employment. But when the fluctuation results merely in the discharge of a few men who are "floaters" or young members, the action of the local union is likely to be different. In these cases the regulars strenuously object to a division of employment and frequently refuse to abide by the rules of the national union upon the subject. The Flint Glass Workers at their convention in 1902, in the hope of discouraging such violations of the rule of equal division, directed one of the local unions to pay two weeks wages to a member whom they had not allowed to share in the division of work.[46] Such practices still exist, however, for the president in 1915 said: "Our attention has been called to the fact that in certain localities, the members of the cutting department attempt to evade the equal division of time rule by catering to the foreman of the shops and receiving favorite treatment from the managers. Conduct of this kind is absolutely wrong, and

[46] Proceedings, 1902, p. 381.

displays a weakness in trade union principles."[47] The members of the Typographical Union voted in 1908 to continue the enforcement of the priority rules, which are a great hindrance to the equal distribution of employment, especially among the substitutes.[48]

The Railroad Brotherhoods, Boilermakers, Iron Molders, Machinists, and other unions still retain in their agreements provision for the seniority rights of members in dull periods. And even where equal division is the rule, it is extremely difficult of enforcement on account of the hostility of the more efficient workmen. An official of the Brewery Workers says: "This new mode of laying off has caused much dissatisfaction, which certainly is not in accord with the socialistic principles which our organization pretends to advocate, and should not reveal itself so openly."[49]

Despite these influences within the unions, however, the agitation for an equal distribution of employment in the dull seasons is gaining great strength. Responsibility for introducing and promoting distribution must in great measure be placed on the unions. In only one of the fourteen industries represented by unions whose members work on short-time and in rotation during dull seasons, is it likely that these methods of meeting the contraction of demand would have been instituted and maintained without the influence of the unions. Conclusive evidence of this is found in the fact that the majority of non-union establishments in these thirteen trades dismiss a part of their working forces in the slack seasons instead of working on short-time or in rotation.

[47] Circular of the Flint Glass Workers' Union, Number 13, February 20, 1915, p. 1.
[48] Typographical Journal, vol. 32, p. 645.
[49] Proceedings, 1903, p. 199.

CHAPTER VI

Unemployment Insurance

The development of beneficiary features in American trade unions has been far slower than in the European trade unions. Of the 111 national unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor in 1916 only 69 were reported as paying benefits of any kind, and of these 35 had established only one form of benefit. Only 9 unions reported that they had expended anything for the support of their unemployed. The expenditures for beneficiary features of these 69 unions were $3,545,823 for the year 1916, and of this sum only $120,770 or about three per cent was for the relief of the unemployed.[1]

In 1908, 669 of the 1058 trade unions in Great Britain paid some form of unemployment benefit. The total expenditures in 1908 in England for this benefit alone was $6,289,565 or $2.75 per capita. This comparison shows the relatively small importance which American trade unions attach to organized out-of-work relief. In the 100 principal trade unions of England, which represent about 60 per cent of the total membership, the total amount of unemployment benefits paid during the three years 1908–1910 was $13,250,000, which was 31 per cent of all expenditures.[2]

There are only three American national unions which at this time, 1916, are paying out-of-work benefits—the Cigar Makers, the Deutsch-Amerikanischen Typographia, and the Diamond Workers.[3]

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[1] Report of Secretary, in Proceedings of the Thirty-sixth Annual Convention of the American Federation of Labor, 1916, p. 31.

[2] The 17th Report on Trade Unions of Great Britain. Report on Trade Unions in 1908–1910, pp. iii, xxi, xxxiii.

[3] Both the Coal Hoisting Engineers, which disbanded in 1904, and the Jewelry Workers, which disbanded in 1912, paid out-of-work

For many years prior to the adoption of this form of benefit by the Cigar Makers, several of the local unions of cigar makers had formed systems of their own. As early as 1875 the New York branch provided that members who had been unemployed for two weeks were entitled to receive benefits for a term of three weeks.[4] At the convention in 1876 Mr. Samuel Gompers, then secretary of the New York City local union, proposed a national out-of-work benefit modeled upon the New York system, but the proposed benefit received scant attention.[5] During the following years several other local unions adopted the New York plan and the movement for a national out-of-work benefit found many adherents.[6] President Hurst recommended to several conventions that the local unions be allowed to vote upon the question but the opponents of the plan declared that the higher dues necessitated by the proposed benefit would force many members from the union, and defeated the measure.[7] President Strasser and other officials argued in favor of an out-of-work benefit at every convention, but it was not until the eighteenth convention, held in September, 1889, that the benefit system as framed by Mr. Gompers was adopted.[8]

The system which went into effect in January, 1890, provided that unemployed members who had paid dues for one year were entitled to $3.00 per week and 50 cents for each additional day, the benefit beginning with the second week of unemployment. After receiving benefits for six consecutive weeks the member was not entitled to any benefit for seven weeks thereafter, and the maximum amount to be received in one year was $72.00. No benefit was to be paid from December 16 to January 15 and from July 1 to July 15, as manufacturers generally closed their shops dur-

benefits. The British trade unions which have members in the United States—the Amalgamated Carpenters and the Amalgamated Engineers—provide for unemployment insurance.

[4] Cigar Makers' Journal, February, 1889, p. 8.

[5] Ibid., September, 1876, p. 1.

[6] Ibid., April, 1877, p. 1.

[7] Ibid., April, 1879, p. 4.

[8] Proceedings of the Eighteenth Convention, 1889, p. 18.

ing these periods. If a member was thrown out of employment on account of intoxication, disorderly conduct, or bad workmanship he was not entitled to any benefit for eight weeks, but inability to hold a job did not deprive a member of his benefit. Those receiving benefits were required to report daily at the secretary's office and sign their names in a book provided for that purpose. Members were not entitled to the benefit if they refused to work in a shop where work was offered, or neglected to apply for employment in a shop if directed to do so by an officer of the local union.

The system was successful from the beginning, although many attempts were made to break down the safeguards established for its proper management. At the convention in 1891 it was provided that a member must procure from the collector of the shop in which he was last employed a certificate stating the cause of his discharge, and that if any member failed to register for three successive days the benefit of previous registration was forfeited, if such registration was for less than one week.[9] On account of the great increase of out-of-work benefits paid in 1894, 1895, and 1896, the convention in the latter year voted to reduce the expenditures for this benefit. This was done by restricting the benefit to cigar makers of two years' membership, by reducing the maximum amount to be drawn in one year from $72.00 to $54.00, and by extending the periods during which the benefit was not to be paid.[10] The system has remained unchanged since the convention of 1896.

During the first year of its operation $22,760 was paid to 2286 members, or less than 10 per cent of the membership. The per capita cost for the first year was 92 cents, 87 cents for the second year, and 65 cents for the third year. During the depression of 1893–1896 the cost increased greatly, there being expended in 1896 $175,767 or $6.43 per capita. Since then the cost has gradually diminished, and except for the years 1908, 1909, 1912, and 1914, has never exceeded

[9] Proceedings of the Nineteenth Convention, 1891, p. 23.
[10] Proceedings of the Twenty-first Convention, 1896, p. 31.

$1.00 per capita. The system had been in operation twenty-five years on January 1, 1915, and had cost the union $1,486,732, or an average annual per capita cost of about $1.90.

The Deutsch-Amerikanischen Typographia established its out-of-work benefit in 1884, eleven years after the national union was founded. As was the case with the Cigar Makers, the system was modeled after a benefit in operation in one of the local unions. The only changes which have been made in the original plan have had to do with the amount of the weekly benefit. At the outset the benefit was fixed at $5.00 per week, but as it was found that the assessments more than paid for the system, it was increased in 1888 to $6.00 per week. However, in 1894 the weekly benefit was reduced to the original amount on account of increased payments due to the general business depression and to the introduction of the linotype. In 1908, owing to the prosperous financial condition of the union, it was again raised to $6.00 per week where it has since remained.

The operation of the system at present is in many respects similar to that of the Cigar Makers. Unemployed members who have been in good standing for two years are entitled to $6.00 per week, beginning with the fourth week of unemployment. After having received benefits for four weeks, a period of three weeks must intervene before the member is again entitled to the benefit, and the amount received during the fiscal year cannot exceed $96.00 Members who are unemployed through their own fault are not entitled to the benefit until they have been on the unemployed list for seven weeks, but if the situation has been voluntarily given up, the member is allowed to draw the benefit after a period of four weeks. The secretaries of the local unions specify certain hours of the day during which the unemployed must register at the union offices. Should the member receive employment for one day while on the unemployed list, $1 is deducted from his weekly benefit, but four days' employment in one week debars him from any benefit for that week. Members who refuse to accept a situation are not allowed to

register for a period of six weeks, while refusal to work as a substitute debars from the benefit for two weeks. Inability to hold a position debars a member from any benefit, and only through the action of the local union can he be given any financial assistance.

The cost of the out-of-work benefit in the Cigar Makers' Union and in the Typographia is shown in the following table:

COST OF MAINTAINING THE OUT-OF-WORK BENEFIT

Year	Typographia		Cigar Makers	
	Total Cost	Per Capita Cost	Total Cost	Per Capita Cost
1885	$ 1,118.90	$ 2.00		
1886	1,453.08	1.52		
1887	1,240.10	1.15		
1888	1,315.13	1.16		
1889	6,281.50	5.55		
1890	4,315.00	3.47	$ 22,760.50	$ .92
1891	6,067.00	4.58	21,223.50	.87
1892	9,359.50	6.77	17,460.75	.65
1893	7,835.00	5.67	89,402.75	3.34
1894	17,262.50	14.33	174,517.25	6.27
1895	9,464.20	8.66	166,377.25	5.99
1896	7,812.00	7.00	175,767.25	6.43
1897	8,485.00	7.83	117,471.40	4.46
1898	8,603.00	7.82	70,197.70	2.65
1899	11,135.00	10.39	38,037.00	1.31
1900	8,703.00	8.33	23,897.00	.70
1901	6,716.00	6.56	27,083.76	.79
1902	7,839.00	7.86	21,071.00	.56
1903	4,846.00	4.86	15,558.00	.39
1904	5,785.00	5.82	29,872.50	.72
1905	5,105.00	5.23	35,168.50	.87
1906	5,086.00	5.22	23,911.00	.61
1907	3,802.00	3.84	19,497.50	.47
1908	6,585.00	6.78	101,483.50	2.51
1909	6,350.00	6.69	76,107.25	1.71
1910	4,011.00	4.34	39,917.00	.91
1911	3,401.00	3.70	36,942.50	.88
1912	3,670.00	4.13	42,911.05	1.06
1913	3,248.00	3.64	31,898.71	.79
1914	3,188.00	3.59	68,198.00	1.70
Total.....	$180,081,91		$1,486,732.62	
Average....	6,002.73	5.61	59,469.30	1.90

Some comparison can be made of the cost of the out-of-work benefit in the two unions. During the twenty years existence of the Cigar Makers' system the average annual per capita cost has been $1.90, while the average annual per capita cost of the German Printers has been $5.61. But this great difference has not been due chiefly to a greater amount of unemployment, although the printers are more subject to unemployment than the cigar makers. The weekly benefit of the Cigar Makers is only one-half of that of the Typographia, while the maximum yearly benefit is only about sixty per cent as great.

During the past few years there appears to have been a tendency towards decreased per capita costs in both unions. This is partly due in the case of the Cigar Makers to a more stringent administration of the system, while in the Typographia it is the result of the introduction of the old age pension in July, 1908. Secretary Miller of the Typographia says that the majority of the members receiving the benefit for the unemployed are the older men who are unable to operate typesetting machines, and that before the introduction of the old age pension these members drew the maximum out-of-work benefit each year.[11]

As the periods in which the two unions have paid unemployment benefits are about the same, it is not surprising that there is a striking correspondence between the fluctuations in their per capita costs. Both fall and rise together throughout the twenty-five years. From 1892 to 1894 the Cigar Makers' per capita cost rose from 65 cents to $6.27 and the Typographia's from $6.77 to $14.33, while from 1899 to 1907 the cost of the Cigar Makers decreased gradually from $1.31 to 47 cents and that of the Typographia from $10.39 to $3.84. Both rose during the panic of 1907–1908 and have since decreased gradually.

The Diamond Workers' Union, organized in 1902, established an out-of-work benefit in 1912. The system went into effect on August 1, 1912. It provided that the out-

[11] In letter to the writer, October 19, 1915.

of-work fund should be maintained by assessments of ten cents per week upon all employed members. Those members who had been employed for thirteen full weeks during the first half-year of their membership and who had been unemployed for six consecutive weeks were entitled to benefits. The unemployed were to receive a benefit of $6.00 per week and $1.00 for each additional day of idleness, but could not draw benefits for more than thirteen weeks, or seventy-eight working days, during the fiscal year. Members drawing benefits who found employment for four consecutive weeks or more were not entitled to an additional benefit until they had been idle for six additional consecutive weeks, while those who had been drawing the benefit and received work for less than four weeks were not to receive the benefit until they had been idle for as many days as they had been employed. Members who had resigned from their employment without reasons satisfactory to the executive board or who had courted their discharge were excluded from the benefit, and those who refused to accept employment when offered forfeited all rights to the benefit during the fiscal year. Those receiving the benefit were compelled to report at the headquarters of the union every Tuesday and Friday between the hours of 10 and 12 A.M.[12]

Several important changes in the system have been made since its establishment. In July, 1913, the weekly benefit was increased from $6.00 to $7.50, and members became entitled to the benefit after they had been unemployed for four weeks instead of six weeks.[13] At first it was thought that with an initial donation of $600.00 to the fund from the general funds of the union the assessment of ten cents per week would be sufficient to defray the expenses of the benefit system. It appears that in normal times the income from this source was sufficient to cover the expenses, but during the depression of 1914–1915 the expenditures for the

[12] Circular of the Diamond Workers Protective Union of America (New York, n. d.).

[13] Letter to the writer from President Andries Meyer, March 7, 1916.

benefit were so large that it was necessary to transfer large sums from the general fund of the union to the out-of-work fund. Thus, from January 1, 1914, to March 31, 1915, $22,600 was drawn from the general fund for the use of the out-of-work benefit.[14] In 1916 the employed members were assessed $1.00 per week besides the regular dues in order to provide new resources for the out-of-work fund.[15]

The following table shows the amounts paid since October 1, 1912:

OUT-OF-WORK BENEFITS PAID BY THE DIAMOND WORKERS' PROTECTIVE UNION

Quarter Ending	Amount
December 31, 1912	$ 435.00
March 31, 1913	78.00
June 30, 1913	36.00
September 30, 1913	181.25
December 31, 1913	567.50
March 31, 1914	3,041.25
June 30, 1914	4,863.75
September 30, 1914	7,163.75
December 31, 1914	7,213.75
March 31, 1915	2,622.50
June 30, 1915	96.25
September 30, 1915	670.00
December 31, 1915	258.70
Total cost	$27,227.70
Average per capita	$ 86.43

Although but three national unions have established out-of-work benefits, a great many, at one time or another, have made special provision for the unemployed by donating money for this purpose from the general funds of the union. These emergency benefits have usually been put into operation during periods of general business depression.

The following table shows the total annual amounts including regular benefits and special appropriations, which have been appropriated for the relief of the unemployed by the unions reporting to the American Federation of Labor.

[14] Quarterly Financial Statements, Jan. 1, to Mar. 31, 1914; Jan. 1 to Mar. 31, 1915.

[15] Letter to the writer from President Andries Meyer, March 7, 1916.

UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS PAID BY UNIONS REPORTING TO THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR, 1903–1916

Year	Amount	Year	Amount
1903	$ 79,538.37	1911	$218,742.71
1904	78,073.25	1912	215,398.60
1905	85,050.72	1913	69,445.70
1906	79,582.70	1914	99,024.88
1907	46,481.79	1915	256,002.29
1908	205,254.31	1916	120,770.60
1909	484,028.49	Total.....	$2,235,202.41
1910	197,808.00	Average.....	$159,657.32

Typical examples of emergency funds for the unemployed are those of the Flint Glass Workers and the Glass Bottle Blowers. The general business depression of 1907 closed many factories in which members of the Flint Glass Workers were employed and the national union was besieged with appeals from the unemployed who numbered over thirty per cent of the membership. A relief fund was established and about $5,000 was donated monthly to the unemployed until business conditions improved.[16]

During the same depression the Glass Bottle Blowers were confronted with a situation not unlike that of the Flint Glass Workers. The general office received so many applications for help that the executive board, on January 7, 1909, decided to establish a fund for the relief of the unemployed by increasing the assessment upon the earnings of those employed. Within a few weeks after its establishment 3200 of the 8200 members were receiving relief. The unemployed married members were given $7.00 per week and the unemployed single members, $5.00 per week for an indefinite period. During the period in which relief was granted there was expended $260,502.75.[17] During the depression of 1914–1915 the national union loaned money to the local unions to relieve the unemployed. In 1914 the sum of $9,890.13 was expended,[18] while in 1915 the expenditure

[16] Proceedings, 1908, p. 91 et seq.
[17] Proceedings, 1910, pp. 50, 70.
[18] Proceedings of American Federation of Labor, 1914, p. 29.

amounted to $55,000.[19] Although this money was to be repaid, it is said that there is very little likelihood that this will be done.

Although the out-of-work benefit has been utilized so little by the American trade unions, there is scarcely a union in which there has not been a more or less continuous agitation for its adoption. These campaigns have been waged not only in the unions which were in existence when the Cigar Makers and the Typographia adopted the benefit, but also in unions founded within the last fifteen years. The agitation has been greatest during periods of general business depression, but it goes on even in the most prosperous years.

The Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners affords an illustration of this continuous agitation. P. J. McGuire, the founder of the union, advocated the establishment of an unemployed benefit. In the conventions of 1894 and 1896 he expounded its advantages and recommended its adoption, but each time the proposed benefit was defeated.[20] President Lloyd at the New York convention of 1898 urged the delegates to establish a benefit for the unemployed, and this time the question was submitted to a referendum vote but was defeated.[21] During the panic of 1908 Secretary Duffy reported to the convention that he heartily favored some plan whereby the union might be able to give aid to the unemployed.[22] At almost every convention since, the question has been debated and in many of the issues of The Carpenter there are letters from members urging the union to adopt some form of unemployment insurance.

The Typographical Union, which has an extensive benefit system, has frequently considered the advisability of establishing an out-of-work benefit. Its officers, like those of the Carpenters, have been the most aggressive exponents of the advantages to be derived from such action. President

[19] Proceedings of American Federation of Labor, 1915, p. 30.
[20] The Carpenter, January, 1908, p. 10.
[21] Proceedings, 1898, p. 8.
[22] Proceedings, 1908, p. 5.

Prescott at the convention of 1894 urged the members to adopt the out-of-work benefit instead of the sick benefit.[23] During the period in which the linotype was displacing great numbers of printers the agitation for an out-of-work benefit became general throughout the union, but each time it was put to a vote of the membership it was defeated. As late as 1907 President Lynch said: "It has long been the belief of the president that the Typographical Union is great enough, experienced enough, and in the possession of the necessary machinery, to establish and successfully carry on an out-of-work benefit."[24] During the depression of 1914 many letters were written to the Typographical Journal urging the adoption of this benefit, and the convention of 1915 provided for the appointment of a committee to investigate the feasibility of establishing an out-of-work benefit for the International Union.[25]

When the Plumbers in 1899 decided to inaugurate a system of benefits, a campaign was made for the out-of-work benefit, but through the conservatism of its officers other benefits were chosen instead. In 1908 the executive board was authorized by the convention to ascertain the probable cost of the benefit, but the finances of the union were in such condition that the adoption of the benefit at that time would have been impossible.[26] In the Pattern Makers this benefit was considered at the organization of the union, and has since been discussed at nearly every convention. As several of its local unions already had unemployment benefits, the movement made considerable headway, but each time the question has been submitted to the members, it has failed of adoption. During the financial panic of 1896 and the years of depression following there was a strong movement in favor of the out-of-work benefit in the Iron, Steel and Tin Workers, Painters, Granite Cutters, Bakers, and Lithographers, but in recent years there appears to have

[23] Barnett, The Printers, p. 103.
[24] Ibid., p. 106.
[25] Proceedings, 1915, p. 65.
[26] Proceedings, 1908, p. 93.

been no attempt in these unions to reopen the question. On the other hand, in the Brewery Workers, Metal Polishers, Photo-Engravers, Boot and Shoe Workers, and Potters, the out-of-work benefit has been the subject of consideration during the past few years, and at each succeeding convention seems to gain additional support.

The failure of the national unions to provide out-of-work benefits has led many local unions in various trades to establish systems of their own. These exist in nearly all unions and some of them have been in existence for many years. Probably the oldest and most important are those found among the Printers.

The Typographical Association of New York City, as early as 1831, provided that the sum of $3.00 per week should be paid to unemployed single members and $4.00 per week to unemployed married members. This benefit was to be paid as long as the members were unemployed unless a member refused to accept a situation offered him or made no effort to procure employment. This system remained in operation for only a few years, but it was reëstablished later and was maintained throughout a business depression.[27] In September, 1893, the unemployed benefit was reëstablished, but it was not until March, 1896, that a permanent system was founded. The money for this benefit was to be secured by an assessment of one per cent on the earnings of those employed. Unemployed members who had been in good standing for one year were entitled to a benefit of $4.00 per week for the first four weeks of unemployment, but not more than four weeks' benefit could be drawn in any six weeks nor more than $60.00 in any one year.[28] This system remained in operation until August, 1907, during which time the sum of $520,645 was expended. The following table shows the annual total cost and the annual average per capita cost.

[27] George A. Stevens, "The History of Typographical Union Number Six" in Annual Report of the New York Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1911, part 1, pp. 112 and 113.

[28] Ibid., pp. 478 and 479.

COST OF MAINTAINING THE OUT-OF-WORK BENEFIT IN THE NEW YORK CITY TYPOGRAPHICAL UNION

Year	Total Cost	Per Capita Cost	Year	Total Cost	Per Capita Cost
1894	$18,259.04	$3.59	1902	$40,715.75	$7.07
1895	17,779.05	3.81	1903	44,510.86	7.14
1896	25,365.20	5.38	1904	45,458.12	7.06
1897	30,211.70	6.29	1905	50,385.80	7.40
1898	35,169.24	6.90	1906	54,701.69	8.11
1899	37,274.13	6.88	1907	40,039.56	5.95
1900	40,323.65	7.45	Total	$520,645.25	
1901	40,451.46	7.36	Average..	$37,188.90	$6.45

It will be noticed that the per capita cost shows no sudden changes in periods of depression or prosperity. With but few exceptions, the cost increased each year—from $3.59 in 1894 to $8.11 in 1906. Inasmuch as the weekly benefit and the maximum amount which could be drawn in one year remained the same it is evident that the benefit, if continued, would have become a serious financial drain upon the union's resources. Since August, 1907, when the system was abolished, the unemployed who have been in need of assistance have been given benefits, ranging from $5.00 to $15.00 according to individual need, through a benefit board which investigates each case to prevent imposition. The money for this relief has been secured by a special assessment of one half of one per cent on the earnings of those employed. During the depression of 1914 this source of income was insufficient and an assessment of five per cent on all earnings of over $10.00 per week was made.[29] Several other local unions of the Printers, especially the Chicago union, have been paying out-of-work benefits for several years.[30]

Notwithstanding the fact that their national union pays unemployment benefits the three hundred German typesetters of the New York City local union have established an additional benefit. This is so arranged that after a member has received the national benefit for four weeks

[29] The Survey, February 20, 1915, p. 550.
[30] Typographical Journal, January, 1915, p. 42.

the local union provides a benefit for the succeeding weeks, during which the unemployed member receives no benefit from the national union.[31]

The Boot and Shoe Workers[32] and the Lithographers[33] have constitutional provisions recommending that their local unions establish out-of-work benefit funds. In both unions several of the subordinate unions have acted upon the suggestion. The New York City branch of the Lithographers, for instance, provides that members who have been unemployed for one week are entitled to a benefit of $3.00 per week. The maximum amount that can be secured in one year is $60. To be entitled to the benefit, a member must secure from the delegate of the shop in which he was last employed a certificate stating the cause of his discharge or lay-off. If he is instructed by a local union officer to apply for a position and fails to do so, he is not entitled to any benefit.[34]

The Bakery and Confectionery Workers at its convention in 1904 recommended that "immediate steps be taken to create in every local union an out-of-work benefit."[35] In 1915 Secretary Iffland stated that about thirty or forty local unions had inaugurated systems for the support of their unemployed.[36] In the Brewery Workers there are probably not less than twenty local unions which pay out-of-work benefits, but as no report of these funds is made to the national union, detailed information cannot be secured concerning them.[37] The Newark, New Jersey, local union, with 370 members, reported to the convention of 1903 that it had expended $10,000 during the previous year for the support of its unemployed,[38] and the Chicago local union of 650 members reported that in 1900 it had disbursed $3,652

[31] The Survey, February 20, 1915, p. 549.
[32] Constitution, 1913, sec. 64.
[33] Constitution, 1913, art. 4, sec. 5.
[34] Constitution, 1905, art. 3, secs. 2, 3, 4 and 5.
[35] Bakers' Journal, October 21, 1905, p. 1.
[36] Interview, August, 1915.
[37] Interview with Secretary Proebstle, August, 1915.
[38] Proceedings, 1903, p. 193.

on account of its unemployment benefit.[39] The Cleveland branch provides that a member who has been out of employment for four weeks is entitled to a benefit of $3.00 per week for ten weeks during a year,[40] and the New York City local union with 1200 members pays a benefit of $4.00 per week for twelve weeks in each of two years, after which a member must pay dues for a full year before he will again be entitled to the benefit.[41]

Several of the larger local unions of the Pattern Makers have had out-of-work benefit systems in operation for the past ten years. The Boston association established its benefit in 1906. It was provided that a member who had been in good standing for at least six months should be entitled to a benefit of $7.00 per week, such benefit to begin after the first week of unemployment and to be limited to thirteen weeks in any one year.[42] During the period April, 1913, to April, 1914, $4,280 was expended for this benefit.[43] The New York City local union has paid the sum of $5.00 per week as relief to its unemployed members for several years. During the year 1908 this benefit cost the union an average of $728 each week.[44]

Among the Photo-Engravers, the local unions in Philadelphia, New York, Chicago, and several other cities have successful out-of-work funds. The New York local union pays to the unemployed a weekly benefit of $6.00 for an indefinite period.[45]

In the following unions there exist but one or two local-union permanent out-of-work benefits: Boilermakers, Blacksmiths, Bookbinders, Cloth Hat and Cap Makers. Commercial Telegraphers, Glass Workers, Hotel and Restaurant Employees, Lace Operatives, Ladies' Garment Workers, Spinners, and Wood Carvers. In the building trades very few local unions maintain out-of-work funds.

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[39] Proceedings, 1901, p. 92.
[40] Proceedings, 1901, p. 91.
[41] The Survey, February 20, 1915, p. 550.
[42] Pattern Makers' Journal, April, 1906, p. 13.
[43] Ibid., May, 1914, p. 20.
[44] Ibid., May, 1908, p. 3.
[45] The Survey, February 20, 1915, p. 550.

An indirect form of unemployment benefit is the exemption of those who are out of work from the payment of dues and assessments. This rule is found in the Blacksmiths, Boilermakers, Brewery Workers, Cigar Makers, Diamond Workers, Glass Workers, Granite Cutters, Hatters, Iron Molders, Leather Workers on Horse Goods, Lithographers, Locomotive Firemen, Machinists, Metal Polishers, United Mine Workers, Pattern Makers, Photo-Engravers, Piano and Organ Workers, Pulp, Sulphite and Paper Mill Operatives, Stove Mounters, and Western Federation of Miners. In other unions, such as the Flint Glass Workers and Printers, where the members are taxed in proportion to the amount of their wages, the unemployed are automatically freed from the payment of dues.

The dues of those unions which have developed strong beneficiary systems have naturally increased with the introduction of each new benefit, and in some cases amount to five per cent of the members' wages. The unemployed member thus finds it difficult at times to remain in good standing. Moreover, in some cases those who have been in arrears for a certain number of weeks are excluded from union benefits. On account of these circumstances about twenty national unions exempt the unemployed from payment of dues so that they can be retained as members and be entitled to the various benefits.

The general character of these provisions is much the same. The Iron Molders exempt unemployed members from payment of dues for a period of not exceeding thirteen weeks in any one year. Those who have paid dues for the preceding six months are entitled to this exemption.[46] This rule was adopted in October, 1897, and to the first of January, 1915, the cost of the system was $316,168.[47]

The United Mine Workers, on account of seasonal unemployment in the trade, exempt members from the payment of dues when unemployed. A member who has been idle

[46] Constitution, 1912, art. 18, sec. 1.
[47] Molders' Journal, February, 1915, p. 112.

for one month is excused from payment of all dues until he again obtains employment.[48] The Granite Cutters provide that any member in good standing who is unemployed shall be exempted from one-half of the regular dues.[49] The Metal Polishers excuse members who are unemployed from the payment of dues for three months after four weeks of idleness.[50]

In view of the fact that the out-of-work benefit is one of the devices by which trade unions protect the standard rate and the working conditions by relieving members of the necessity of accepting less favorable terms aind conditions, it is difficult to understand why the out-of-work benefit is not more widely used. In the greater number of unions the officers are staunch advocates of the system, and there is no more ardent supporter of out-of-work benefits than President Gompers of the American Federation of Labor. At the New York convention of the American Federation of Labor in 1898, the delegates went on record as endorsing the payment of the benefit and urged all affiliated unions to establish such a system.[51]

Two reasons can be stated for the slight development of the out-of-work benefit in American trade unions; first, the unwillingness of the average union member to acquiesce in the necessary increase of dues; and second, the apparent inadequacy of the administrative agencies of the union to secure a just distribution of the benefit.

The first of these hindrances to the establishment of the out-of-work benefit needs little comment. The average workingman joins a trade union chiefly from the desire to carry a union card and participate in the better conditions secured by the union. The matter of benefits, and especially out-of-work benefits, is of secondary importance. He wants to be a member of the union, but he also wants the dues to be as small as possible.

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[48] Constitution, 1914, art. 14, sec. 23.
[49] Constitution, 1912, sec. 134.
[50] Constitution, 1913, art. 17, sec. 3.
[51] Proceedings, 1899, p. 5677.

The second hindrance grows chiefly out of the personal acquaintance of the local union officials with the members. The experience of the Cigar Makers, and for that matter, the history of any trade union benefit, shows that there are always local union officials who pay benefits which should not have been paid. The disbursing agencies must be given considerable discretion in determining whether or not the applicants are entitled to the benefit. Further, the local officials seem unable to deal strictly with a member who abandons a job on plausible grounds. The experience of the New York local union of the Typographical Union with an out-of-work benefit may be cited. A member of that organization writes: "We found that a number of men each year drew the full amount that was permitted them under the laws regulating the fund, and that these men could best be described as 'panhandlers.' The abuses in our case eventually became so flagrant that the fund was abolished upon the report of an investigating committee to the effect that the majority of the beneficiaries of the fund belonged to this dissolute class."[52] The unions have specifically set forth in the rules on the subject the manner in which the benefit systems are to be administered and the various conditions under which the unemployed members shall become entitled to the benefit. The systems generally have been well planned but poorly administered.

Since the establishment by Great Britain of a comprehensive insurance plan some of the American trade union officials have inaugurated campaigns for the adoption of a similar scheme by this government.[53] Inasmuch as the concensus of opinion among recent writers on the subject is in favor of utilizing the trade union in a scheme of government insurance,[54] it is not surprising that American repre-

[52] A. J. Portenar, Problems of Organized Labor, p. 73.

[53] The text of the British Insurance Act is contained in Bulletin of the United States Bureau of Labor, No. 102.

[54] I. G. Gibbon, Unemployment Insurance, p. 251; Cyril Jackson, Unemployment and Trade Unions, p. 29; Henry R. Seager, "Outline of a Program of Social Legislation," in Proceedings of the first Annual Meeting of the American Association for Labor Legislation, 1907, p. 87.

sentatives of organized labor demand that the trade unions should be given the right to administer the benefit among their own members.[55]

We have seen that three national unions have established unemployment benefits, that a few more have provided emergency relief funds for those out of work, and that a small percentage of the local unions have regular benefits for the unemployed. Under such conditions one might expect to find the average unemployed trade unionist in as bad a predicament as the unemployed non-unionist. But such is by no means the case. There is scarcely one American local union which does not in some form or other contribute towards the support of its unemployed members when they are in need of assistance. A member out of work is rarely turned away from the union without receiving some assistance. In some cases it may take the form of a loan of a few dollars, but his union will rarely allow him to suffer from want. The usual procedure is for a friend of the unemployed to announce at a meeting of the local union that a brother member is unemployed and in need of money to pay the rent and secure the necessities of life. With scarcely any further remarks, the union votes to donate a sum of money to the member. In other cases the local union sets aside a certain sum of money for the relief of the unemployed, and appoints a committee which has complete control over the granting of aid.

Frequently the unions, in periods of general business depression, maintain relief agencies for their unemployed. In 1915 some two hundred Jewish trade unions of New York City opened headquarters on the lower East Side and gave out groceries to their unemployed members.[56] From January 1 to May 1 of the same year, the bricklayers' local union of Toronto, Ontario, donated 372 baskets of groceries and

[55] G. W. Perkins, in American Labor Legislation Review, June, 1913, p. 236; T. J. Dolan, in the Steam Shovel and Dredge Man, April, 1915, p. 380; Proceedings of the Massachusetts Federation of Labor, 1915.

[56] The American Labor Legislation Review, November, 1915, p. 104.

many tons of coal to their unemployed members.[57] Of course, these relief agencies are marked with the stigma of charity and consequently only those who are in dire need apply to them. The system is far from ideal. The unemployed are assisted only when they are in great need, and those who have been fortunate and wise enough to save for the days of unemployment do not receive any aid from the system. But, as one trade unionist said, "It is better than that provided for the non-unionist."

The effectiveness of even so crude a system is shown by the fact that union members are rarely found among the applicants to organized charities. Those associated with charity organizations adequately appreciate the valuable social services performed by the trade unions. A writer on the subject says, "Charity workers testify to the fact that during business depressions when the unemployed must be cared for by the thousands, scarcely a single member of a trade union has applied for relief either to the cities or to philanthropic organizations."[58] The Secretary of the United Charities of St. Paul, Minnesota, stated that in 1914–1915 "The trade unions with their benefit features have been the saving grace in the situation here."[59] In December, 1913, the city of Seattle, Washington, provided special work for the unemployed, and of the 1300 men who applied for work only six were members of trade unions.[60] The chairman of the relief work in Chicago during the severe season of 1893–1894 reported that not a single member of a trade union in that city applied for aid either to the city or to the philanthropic organizations.[61]

As further proof of this fact, the report of the Commission of Industrial Relations may be quoted: "It is

[57] The Bricklayer, Mason and Plasterer, May, 1915, p. 104.
[58] Adna F. Weber, quoted in the Bricklayer and Mason, January, 1902, p. 7.
[59] Quoted in the American Labor Legislation Review, November, 1915, p. 589.
[60] Associated Press Dispatch.
[61] Bulletin of the United States Department of Labor, Number 22, May, 1899, p. 400.

significant that trade union members are practically never found among the applicants for charity during periods of unemployment. They may be unemployed, but they are in some way cared for, either by having work found for them, or by systematic or voluntary relief."[62] With but few exceptions, those applying to charitable organizations as union members are found to be expelled members or in arrears with their dues.[63]

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[62] Final Report of the Commission on Industrial Relations, 1915, p. 175.

[63] Mr. C. C. Rohr, a member of the Economic Seminary of Johns Hopkins University, in 1911–1912 made an investigation of 500 cases of the Federated Charities of Baltimore City. The Charity records showed that of the 500 applicants 19 were members of trade unions. Upon investigation, however, nine of these were found never to have been associated with any union. And of the remaining ten only two were union members in good standing at the time when the period of unemployment began. One of these was unable to live upon the strike benefits of his union, and the other was a member of a local union on strike which had expended its entire strike fund.

INDEX

American Federation of Labor, 15, 51, 52, 53, 70, 93, 123, 130, 137–138, 146.
American Tinplate Company, 119.
Apprenticeship, 36–37.

Bakers and Confectioners of Chicago, 62.
Bakery and Confectionery Workers' International Union, 64, 67, 84, 120, 124, 140, 143.
Balsinger, President, 84.
Barbers' International Union, Journeymen, 64.
Barnes, Charles E., 33.
Barnett, George E., 44, 108, 124 (note), 140 (note).
Benefits. See Insurance.
Beveridge, W. H., 19.
Blacksmiths and Helpers, International Brotherhood of, 59, 67, 84, 123, 144, 145.
Boilermakers, Iron Shipbuilders and Helpers of America, International Brotherhood of, 15, 60, 123, 129, 144, 145.
Bookbinders, International Brotherhood of, 82, 87, 91, 120, 144.
Boot and Shoe Workers' Union, 87, 120, 141, 143.
Boston Free Employment Office, 71.
Brandeis, Louis D., 113.
Brass and Composition Metal Workers, Polishers, and Buffers, United Brotherhood of, 59.
Brewery Workmen, International Union of the United, 39, 42, 64, 67, 108, 121, 122, 129, 141, 143, 145.
Bricklayers, Masons and Plasterers, International Union of, 17, 42, 54, 65, 84, 86, 87, 88, 90, 91, 102.
Bridge and Structural Iron Workers, International Association of, 40, 52, 60, 65, 84, 86, 87, 89, 90, 93.
Business agent, 58 ff; salary of, 59; duties of, 60; why employers apply to, 62–63; one of the union members, 64.

"Calling around," 66.
Cards, interchange of, 42–43.
Carpenters and Joiners, United Brotherhood of, 40, 42, 52, 59, 65, 86, 87, 88, 107, 139.
Carter, President, 82, 107.
Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Strike, 82.
Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railway, 123
Cigar Makers, International Union of, 32, 58, 67, 69, 86, 90, 94, 102, 103, 104, 130, 134, 135, 139, 145, 147.
Cloth Hat and Cap Makers, United, 110, 115, 126, 144.
Commercial Telegraphers, Brotherhood of, 42, 120, 144.
Commisison of Industrial Relations, 149.
Coopers, International Union of, 87, 120.
Crown, Cork and Seal Operatives, 123.

Diamond Workers' Protective Union, 130, 135–137, 145.
Dismissal of workmen, 123 ff.
Dobbins, Secretary, 96.
Dobson, Secretary, 17 (note), 85.
Dovetailing of trades, 30–31.
Drawing of lots, 68.
Drayer, Secretary, 86.
Duffy, Secretary, 139.
Duncan, President, 52, 56, 96.
Dunderdale, Superintendent, 71.

Efficiency of Workmen, 125–126.

Electrical Workers, International Union of, 15, 37, 38, 60, 84, 89, 93, 108.
Emergency funds, 138.
Employment, distribution of, 109 ff.; ways of distributing, 109–124; conditions effecting union policies toward, 125–128; union objections to, 128–129.
Employment, subsidiary, 20–21; varies with the trade, 31; through help of fellow-workmen, 64; through advertisements, 73–74.
Employment bureaus, public, 69 ff.; state, 69; employers, 73; religious and charitable, 73.
Employment bureaus, union, 57 ff.; need of, varies, 58; agencies for securing help, 58; methods of choosing workmen, 67 ff.

"Five day" rule, 123–124.
"Fliers," 76.
Flint Glass Workers' Union, American, 17, 19, 30, 39, 40, 42, 64, 78, 86, 87, 92, 94, 96, 103, 104, 110, 117, 123, 128, 138, 145.
Fluctuation, 19 ff.; remedies for, 29–31.
Furuseth, President, 70.

Garland, President, 84, 119.
Garment Workers' Union, Ladies, 42, 58, 110, 112, 123, 126, 144.
Garment Workers, United, 42, 58, 87, 110, 114.
Glass Bottle Blowers' Association, 16, 42, 76, 119, 123, 138.
Glass Workers' International Association, Amalgamated, 122, 144, 145.
Glove Workers' Union, International, 110, 115.
Gompers, Samuel, 52, 53, 70, 95, 131, 146.
Granite Cutters' International Association, 52, 54, 56, 75, 87, 94, 95, 103, 140, 145, 146.

Hatters of North America, United, 66, 67, 110, 115, 145.
Hayes, President, 77, 120.
Hays, Secretary, 83.
Hotel and Restaurant Employees' International Alliance, 72, 144.
Hurst, President, 131.

Iffland, Secretary, 143.
Illinois Free Employment Agency, 71.
Indiana Typographical Conference, 88.
Industrial depressions, effect of, 28–29.
Insurance, national unions having, 130–141; systems in local unions, 141–144; indirect form of, 145–146; reasons for not having, 146–147; campaigns for government, 147.
Iron, Steel and Tin Workers, Amalgamated Association of, 84, 110, 118, 123, 140.

Journals, 86 ff.

Kelley, President, 49, 51.
Kunzler, Secretary, 96.

Labor supply, methods of adjusting, 75–76; systems in different unions, 76–90; failure to solve problems, 90–92; hindrances in the movement of, 107.
Lace Operatives, Chartered Society of the Amalgamated, 120, 144.
Lathers, International Union of Wood, Wire and Metal, 86.
Laundry Workers' International Union, 120.
Lawlor, Martin, 67 (note), 115.
Lawrence, Vice-President, 88.
Leather Workers on Horse Goods, United Brotherhood of, 83, 87, 94, 99, 103, 104, 120, 145.
Lithographers' International Protective and Beneficial Association, 15, 58, 64, 67, 79, 88, 94, 100, 120, 126, 140, 143, 145.
Lloyd, President, 139.
Locomotive Engineers, Grand International Brotherhood of, 45.

Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen, Brotherhood of, 81, 145.
Lots, drawing of, 68.
Lynch, President, 45, 83, 88, 140.

McGuire, P. J., 52, 139.
Machinists, International Association of, 39, 40, 47, 59, 60, 67, 94, 99, 103, 123, 129, 145.
Maintenance of Way Employees, International Brotherhood of, 42.
Marble Workers, International Association of, 92.
Maryland Federation of Labor, 71.
Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics, 12, 21, 25.
Massachusetts Employment Bureau, 72.
Membership, limited, 35–36.
Metal Polishers, Buffers, Platers, Brass Molders and Brass and Silver Workers, International Union of, 15, 54, 59, 120, 123, 141, 145, 146.
Miller, Secretary Hugo, 101, 135.
Mine Workers, United, 42, 67, 110.
Miners, Western Federation of, 42, 110, 145.
Mitchell, John, 111.
Molders' Union, International, 15, 59, 86, 120, 123, 129, 145.
Murphy, President, 38, 108.

New England Typographical Union, 88.
New Hampshire Bureau of Labor, 14.
New York Department of Labor, 10, 13 (note), 14 (note), 21, 25, 32.
New York Public Employment Bureau, 71.
Normal day, shortening of, 50–53.
Northern Pacific Railroad, 45–46.

O'Connell, President, 51, 100.
Out-of-work list, compulsory, 67; optional, 67.
Output, restriction of, 46–50.
Overtime, regulation of, 54–56.

Painters, Decorators, and Paperhangers, Brotherhood of, 16, 42, 52, 60, 87, 88, 91, 101, 107, 140.
Paper Makers, International Brotherhood of, 120.
Pattern Makers' League, 17, 21, 28, 59, 60, 62, 67, 81, 120, 123, 140, 144, 145.
Perkins, President, 104.
Permit system, 37–41; effect on transference of workmen, 108.
Pfeiffer, Secretary, 84.
Photo-Engravers' Union, International, 36, 54, 64, 67, 79, 87, 120, 141, 144, 145.
Piano, Organ and Musical Instrument Workers' International Union, 145.
Plasterers' International Association, Operative, 40, 42, 86.
Plumbers, Gas Fitters, Steam Fitters and Steam Fitters Helpers' United Association of Journeymen, 15, 37, 41, 48, 51, 86, 102, 140.
Potters, International Brotherhood of Operative, 15, 64, 80, 116, 141.
Prescott, President, 139–140.
Printers. See Typographical Union.
Proebstle, 39 (note), 122, 143 (note).
Pulp, Sulphite and Paper Mill Workers, International Brotherhood of, 145.

Railroad Telegraphers, Order of, 42.
Railroad Trainmen, Brotherhood of, 82.
Railway Carmen, Brotherhood of, 42.
Railway Conductors, Brotherhood of, 82.
Rock Island Federated Trades, 123.
Rotation of workers, 120–123.
Rowe, President, 40.

Sanitary Manufacturing Potters' Association, 116.
Seamen's Union, International. 67.
Sears, Mr., 71.